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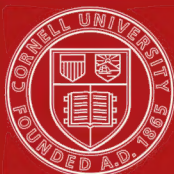


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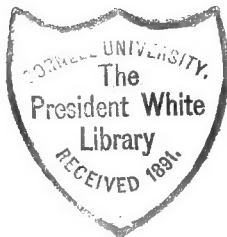
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THE
PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE:
WITH
THEIR ANSWERS.

COLLECTED BY
A CHURCH MEMBER.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY A. S. BARNES & CO.
1855.
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TO
THE FRIEND
WHO SUGGESTED THE IDEA OF THE PRESENT VOLUME
IT IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,
BY THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

Prayers of the Old Testament.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	13
Prayer of Abram.....	18
Prayer of Abraham for the Cities of the Plain.....	21
Prayer of Abraham's Servant.....	24
Prayer of Jacob for Deliverance from Esau.....	27
Israel's Prayer for God's Blessing on Joseph, Ephraim, and Ma- nasseh.....	29
Prayer of Moses	32
Prayer of Moses for Water for the Children of Israel.....	35
Prayer of Moses to avert the Divine Anger.....	36
Prayer of Moses when the People made the Golden Calf.....	38
Prayer of Moses that he may see the Glory of the Lord.....	40
Prayer of Moses on Mount Sinai.....	43
Prayer of Moses for the Scattering of the Lord's Enemies.....	46
Prayer of Moses when the people Weep for Flesh to Eat.....	47
Prayer of Moses as to the manner in which the Lord will give the people Flesh to Eat.....	49

Prayer of Moses for Miriam.....	52
Prayer of Moses that the People may not be Smitten with Pestilence.....	54
Prayer of Moses that the Lord would set a Man over the Congregation	57
Prayer of Joshua.....	60
Prayer of Hannah.....	63
Prayer of Samuel.....	67
Prayer of Samuel for a Thunder Storm in time of Wheat Harvest.....	69
Prayer of David under Trying Circumstances.....	71
Prayer of David when the Amalekites had invaded Ziklag....	72
Prayer of David and Thanksgiving.....	74
Prayer of David as he went weeping up the Mount of Olivet ..	76
Prayer of David after his Transgression in numbering Israel and Judah	78
Prayer of Solomon for Wisdom.....	80
Prayer of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple.....	82
Prayer of the Prophet for the Restoration of Jeroboam's Withered Hand.....	88
The Power of Effectual Fervent Prayer.....	90
Prayer of Elijah for the Restoration of the Widow's Son.....	91
Prayer of Elijah on Mount Carmel.....	94
Prayer of Elisha for his Servant.....	95
Prayer of Hezekiah.....	97
Prayer of Hezekiah in Sickness.....	98
Prayer of Jabez.....	101
United Prayer of an Army.....	102

	PAGE
Prayer of Asa.....	103
Prayer of Jehoshaphat.....	105
Prayer of Hezekiah for those who had eaten the Passover without Purification.....	107
Prayer of Manasseh when in Affliction.....	108
Prayer of Nehemiah for the Captive Remnant of Judah.....	110
Prayers of Nehemiah while Building the Walls of Jerusalem..	113
Prayer of Job.....	115
Prayer of Job after he had been visited by his Friends.....	117
Prayer of Job that God would hide him from his Anger.....	119
Prayer of Job that he might feel God's Presence.....	121
Job's Prayer for an Answer to his Petitions.....	123
Prayer of Job after he had received the Answer.....	127
Prayers contained in the Psalms	129
Prayer of Agur.....	140
Allegorical Prayer of the Church.....	143
Isaiah's Thanksgiving.....	145
Isaiah's Acknowledgment of God's Mercy.....	146
Isaiah's Trust in God and Prayer for the Church.....	148
Prayer of the Church for Deliverance from her Enemies.....	151
Israel's Prayer in Returning to God, and for the Unconverted Remnant of the People.....	152
Prayer of the Prophet Jeremiah.....	160
A Voice of Weeping and Supplication from Israel.....	162
Jeremiah Prayeth and Teacheth his People how to view Calamity.....	163
Jeremiah, Perplexed on account of Conspiracy, Prays.....	164

	PAGE
Jeremiah Intercedes for his People in Time of Famine.....	166
A Voice of Weeping and Supplication from Rachel.....	173
The Bemoanings of Ephraim.....	174
Prayer of Jeremiah in Prison.....	175
Lament of Jeremiah.....	182
Jeremiah Acknowledges the Lord as his Portion.....	185
Intercession of Ezekiel.....	187
Ezekiel Complains that the People do not Understand.....	190
Prayer of Daniel and his Companions that the Lord would Interpret Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.....	192
Nebuchadnezzar Convicted Blesses God.....	195
Thanksgiving of Nebuchadnezzar.....	196
Prayer of Daniel for the Restoration of Jerusalem.....	198
The Prophet Joel's Prayer in Time of Famine.....	203
Prayers of Amos that God would Avert the Judgments of the Fire and Grasshoppers.....	204
Prayer of the Mariners in the Storm.....	205
Prayer of Jonah from the Midst of the Sea.....	208
Jonah Prays that God will take his life.....	210
Prayer of the Church Complaining of Small Numbers, and of the General Corruption.....	212
Prayer of Habakkuk.....	214
Habakkuk Prays in prospect of Approaching Trials.....	217
Habakkuk's Expectation of Answers to his Prayers.....	218
Prayer of Habakkuk upon Shigionoth (or Musical Instrument). ..	219
Prayer of the Jews concerning their Fasts.....	223

Prayers of the New Testament.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	227
The Lord's Prayer.....	233
The Leper's Prayer.....	235
Prayer of the Centurion....	237
Prayer of the Disciples in the Storm	239
Prayer of Jairus	241
Silent Prayer of Faith.....	244
Prayer of two Blind Men.....	246
Prayer of our Blessed Lord.....	248
Prayer of Peter.....	250
Prayer of the Syro-Phœnician Woman.....	253
Prayer of a Mother for her Sons.....	255
Prayer of the Five Foolish Virgins.....	257
Prayer of the Disciples at Meat with our Saviour	259
Prayer of our Saviour.....	260
Prayer of our Saviour from the Cross.....	262
Prayer of the Man that had been Possessed with a Devil.....	264
Prayer of Mary, the Mother of our Saviour	268
Prayer of Simeon in the Temple.....	271
Prayer of Anna.....	272
Prayer of Simon Peter.....	275
Prayer of Peter on the Mount.....	276
Prayer of the Prodigal Son.....	277
Prayer of Dives	281

	PAGE
Prayer of the Ten Lepers	285
Prayers of the Pharisee and Publican.....	287
Prayer of the Young Ruler.....	290
Prayer of our Saviour from the Cross	293
Prayer of the Thief from the Cross	296
Prayer of a Nobleman	299
Prayers of Martha and Mary.....	301
Prayer of Philip.....	304
Prayer of Judas, not Iscariot.....	307
Prayer of our Saviour	310
Prayer of the Apostles	314
Prayer of the Church.....	316
Prayer of Stephen	318
Prayer of Saul of Tarsus, after his Conversion	319
Prayers of the Church for Peter	323
The Prayers and Praises of Paul and Silas.....	325
Prayer of St. Paul in the Temple.....	328
Prayers of St. Paul for the Church at Rome.....	330
Prayer of St. Paul for the Church at Corinth	333
Prayer of St. Paul for the Church at Ephesus.....	335
Prayer of St. Paul for the Church at Colosse.....	337
Prayer of St. Paul for the Church at Thessalonica.....	339

“**THINK!**—the shadow on the dial,
For the nature most undone,
Marks the passing of the trial,
Proves the presence of the sun.

“**LOOK!**—look up in starry passion,
To the throne above the spheres,
LEARN!—the spirit’s gravitation
Still must differ from the tear’s.

“**HOPE!**—with all the strength thou usest
In embracing thy despair;
LOVE!—*the earthly love thou lovest*
Shall return to thee more fair.

“**WORK!**—make clear the forest tangling
Of the wildest stranger land;
TRUST!—the blessed, deathly angels
Whisper, ‘Sabbath hours at hand.’”

INTRODUCTION.

“YEA, very vain
The greatest speed of all the souls of men
Unless they travel upward to thy throne;
There sittest Thou, the satisfying One,
With help for sins.”

THE hand of the Almighty had forever closed the gates of Eden and left there the flaming sword of the cherubim to prevent the return of our guilty first parents. The alluring voice of the tempter had led their souls into sin, and as they wandered forth to inherit the earth, cursed for their sakes, they were troubled in the presence of the God whom they had offended, trembling because conscious guilt stood before the perfection of the Almighty. But there was a ray of hope for their despairing hearts. Satan had not, as he fancied, achieved a permanent triumph over them, or separated them from God forever, for while the wrath of an offended Deity hung over the soul, and justice cursed it, love and mercy lifted it where it might breathe the still air of heav-

en—no chains were to bind the spirit of ruined man in everlasting darkness, for this exiled world and its inmates were objects of God's infinite love, man's restoration had been a thought hidden in the eternal mind before the world was, and it was breathed into the human soul in that glorious promise which should bruise the head of the serpent, and open a way where man might seek and find the lost favor of his God.

In that early history of the human race sacrifices were instituted, and on the sacred page we have the accepted and the rejected offering; through the long ages that have rolled away since then, man has held communion with his Maker, "there has been no such curse in the calender of time as a day without prayer"—

"Earth and heaven hold commune day and night;
There's not a wind but bears upon its wing
The messages of God."

"There is a link of communication between the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, and the heart of the contrite in which he delighteth to dwell." Between our present earthly and, we trust, our future heavenly home, God has established a telegraph, free to us all; it bears not to the soul of man sad messages of sorrow to clothe him in sackcloth and bathe him in tears; no! its tidings are from a better land where sin has no entrance and

sorrow is unknown; they are answers of a kind father to his children's call for help and strength in their life journey. *

God has seen fit to preserve in his holy word the prayers of many of his children; the patriarchs and prophets *spake* as they were moved by God, but they like us were mortal, sent forward on a long and tedious pilgrimage, called to battle with the same *inborn* corruptions and *outward* temptations with which we are called to struggle; they filled their inch of time, and passed as we are passing, onward to meet our God and Judge. We have carefully gathered from the Bible the "recorded prayers" and their answers; we would show you where lay the creature's strength—would remind you by them, that the same mercy-seat is now open before you, at which those holy men were so often found. You will learn a lesson here that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain is calling each one to his mercy-seat; it is found equally in that house of prayer where with one heart and voice our cloud of incense is wafted upward, and in the cottage of the poor man, where no eye but God's is watching, and no ear but his hears.

It is then the duty of all to avail themselves of the high and holy privilege of prayer, for we have the promise of the immutable Jehovah, that not in vain shall we enter his council-chamber. We would

draw the attention of all to the recorded prayers of the Bible—to their simplicity and earnestness—and would point out to the believer what God called true devotion; would lead you to see, by His help, that the poor sacrifice so many of you are now making statedly at his altar, must not be dignified by the *name* of prayer; that you may no longer call yourselves in his presence “miserable, blind, and naked,” when there is no tear of sorrow, and no sigh over the conceit of your hearts. In the prayers of Abram and Isaac, and all those men who walked with God, you will learn the Almighty accepts no such empty sacrifice as yours.

“He requires fruits of more pleasing savor,
From his seed sown with contrition in the heart.”

The spirit in which most of these prayers are breathed is child-like; they are uttered thoughts to Him who is not only able but willing to satisfy; they are the opening of the heart to God with its *simplest* as well as largest desire, uttered with directness and earnestness.

Oh, learn from these prayers to walk with God as they walked who have fallen asleep; learn to live on earth and breathe in heaven. Oh, make the way to his mercy-seat a worn and beaten track, talk daily and hourly with God; then all your desires, your hopes, your affections, shall be centered in Him, and as we have sought to purify them by

prayer, so shall He who regardeth the faintest whisper in his ear, take us when the scenes of earth have faded, where *we* shall be *satisfied*—where all the eager, anxious questions of our thinking minds shall be answered, our desires all gratified, and every care lost in the bosom of God.

THE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE.

The Old Testament.

A PRAYER OF ABRAM.

THE life of "the father of the faithful" was chequered and eventful; although he is not introduced to our notice till his seventy-fifth year, yet we meet him as the friend of God, and are able to follow him through many sad and bitter trials. At times an exile and wanderer, homeless and houseless, we find him, everywhere and under every circumstance, rearing an altar to God, and *calling* upon him for strength and support. When the following prayer was made by Abram, he was rich and respected, a conqueror over his enemies, a blessing to his friends; his life's work seemed almost over, and he felt death was not very far distant. He contemplated his present position, and as his mind rested upon his wealth, there was no regret in his heart that he must leave it behind him. Oh, *no*, his treas-

ure in *heaven* was far greater to his eye of faith. Still there was a sorrow in his bosom that not one of his own name might inherit his worldly possessions, but they must descend to the steward of his household.

In the language of the prayer, and from what we learn of the character of Abram, we are satisfied his desire was not the merely natural one, for he rejoiced in the coming Saviour, and was ready at the command of God to sacrifice the son for whom he had prayed, and was one who at the call of duty had ever been ready to give up home and friends, firmly relying on the promises of the Almighty. Nothing seemed for any length of time to disturb the *steady faith* of his soul; but now and then in his eventful life, we see the slight temptation prevailing when the greater were overcome; in the firmest believer we sometimes see the *weakest* man. God in his answer to this prayer does not check the ardor or seeming impatience of Abram, but promises a speedy fulfillment of all his wishes, even a son, the progenitor after the flesh of the blessed Saviour. "The sincere Bible reader is always gratified when he remembers, that here is the model of every religious rite that has existed in any age. Many described by profane writers derived their pattern from those mentioned in the writings of Moses." It would be useless to inquire into the nature of the vision that appeared to Abraham. Every true be-

liever *feels* the presence of God in his *heart*, and as long as he *loves*, and *serves* Him, he is visible to his spiritual eye, and "his ear hears the voice of the Lord." The holy friendship existing between Abraham and his heavenly Father, may be ours; he lived like a pilgrim—his whole life proved he was tarrying but a night. All that was earthly of Abram lies now in the dust of yonder cave; his spirit is in heaven—his prayers stored there, and for us preserved on the sacred page. The descendants of Abram indeed became strangers in the land of Canaan, and were there oppressed and down-trodden; "a prophecy fore-uttered through the tongues of time, ages of ages."

The Prayer as recorded.—Genesis xv.

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou has given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

The Answer.—Genesis xv.

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

The Prayer continued.

8 And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

The answer continued.

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

A PRAYER OF ABRAHAM FOR THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

Most nobly had Abram given Lot the choice of his home, and the fertile plain of Sodom was now his dwelling-place. Wickedness abounded there, and the Lord had made known his intention to Abraham of destroying the "cities of the plain."

Abraham is alarmed at the intimation, and knows it is no small sin that has thus called down the terrors of the Almighty. There are precious souls in those doomed cities, and Abram pleads at the throne of the Most High for them. Every circumstance connected with the intercession of Abraham is interesting to the believer: his unselfishness toward his nephew, his earnest affection for him after his choice of a home in Sodom, unfolds to us the heart of a humble follower of God, seeking not his own good, but the glory of the Father and the true welfare of man. Abraham comes to God in prayer, with the assurance that the great Judge of all will do right; there is a sacred ingenuity in the argument which he uses in his intercession—he does not ask the Lord to spare the wicked for their own sakes, but for the pious souls that are in the cities. The promises made by God to the successively reduced number of the righteous for whom this prayer was made, encourages us in the duty of interceding for others. The effectual, fervent prayer availeth much, and brings to our own hearts a blessing, even if in our view God has not directly answered us. While Abraham earnestly pleads with God, his soul is full of humility; I am a mortal in the presence of the great Creator, I have nothing to give but all to ask; this is his spirit, as he owns himself but dust and ashes. The intercessory prayers of Christians are destined instruments in the hand of God for bring-

ing on the glorious time when all the earth shall know him; each one as it is breathed in the ear of God, is dearer to him than the brightest effort of unhallowed genius—although this may be derided by the world as a revery, and the unbeliever may talk to us of mistaken zeal.

The Prayer and its Answer, as recorded.—Gen. xviii.

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30 And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

A PRAYER OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT.

Not only was Abraham himself a man of prayer, but his family and those of his household seem to have breathed his spirit. Isaac his son is mentioned as one who loved to meditate, and we find him at the evening hour communing with God; "mistrusting self, he leaned on heaven." Sarah, the beloved wife of Abraham, slept in death; grief rested heavily on the heart of Isaac, for his mother was one whom he had loved and cherished. He appealed to his father Abraham for direction and advice, in a matter involving his temporal happiness, and, no doubt, sought the Lord to guide the servant whom Abraham sent to the fair Rebekah. In the choice of a wife for his son, Abraham is not influenced by worldly considerations; he would choose for him a virtuous and religious companion—with whom he could go down the vale of life, with *one* prayer,

one God, and *one* heart. The servant whom he sends to meet the chosen one is a man fearing the Lord, and in all his ways acknowledging him. While on his journey he prays. Affectionate to his master, faithful to his trust, with the blessing of God he is ready for duty; and so should it be ever with us—let us do nothing in our own strength; as long as—

“ Evil walks the world unsleeping,
Evil sleeps within the soul,”

we need the protection of our heavenly Father; prayer must nerve us for duty, prayer must teach us to be faithful. Scarcely is the petition made when the servant beholds its answer, in the form of Rebekah at the well. In the whole of this scene we see the guiding hand of God. There is no want of modesty in Rebekah—a trait so essential to perfect female character—but all the simplicity of nature. God, in answer to prayer, prepared the hearts of Isaac and Rebekah to realize, when they meet, that union of soul, of which the cold, calculating world knows nothing—a union which only heaven and nature teaches, and God will hallow—

“ Making hearts, like double stars,
One in their bright effect.”

It is not well for man to walk through life alone; Isaac felt the want of gentle companionship—felt the want of his mother's love. “That wild flower, the

soul, with its tendrils the affections," needs the training of the planter, and while they twine round the frail supports of earth, must also twine upward; and, would we make them ready for a purer soil we must bring them where the air of heaven will fan and the dew of prayer moisten.

The Prayer as recorded.—Genesis xxiv.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.

The Answer.—Genesis xxiv.

15 And it came to pass before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up

17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

61 And Rebekah arose and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

A PRAYER OF JACOB FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ESAU.

The first impression made by the character of Jacob, as recorded in the Bible, is far from favorable. There is much enmity existing between himself and his brother Esau. We meet him under a great variety of circumstances, the subject of many deep and heavy trials, hated by one who should have been nearer than a brother, an exile and wanderer, deserted and alone in the plain of Bethel; when poor, the object of persecution, when prosperous, the victim of the envious. There is not one of all the patriarchs whose path lay so thickly strewn with sorrows, many of them, too, the bitter fruits of the seed of his own wild sowing. The plan of divine providence had been imparted to Jacob in that vision of the night, in that dream from which he awoke filled with the presence of the Lord—a holy sense which enabled him to endure with sub-

mission almost uninterrupted hardship, and made his death a happy and quiet release.

Jacob was about to meet Esau at the head of an army of four hundred men. Knowing he had given his brother cause for resentment, he had much reason to dread the encounter, and has recourse to prayer; with all his anxiety and evil foreboding he comes to God; we have reason to infer that a whole night was passed in communion with his Maker; his prayer was earnest and anxious. It is thus God likes to be importuned, and in this prayer we are taught the nature of true, heartfelt petition. God does not answer this prayer as we would be led to suppose; he does not destroy the gathered hosts, or send some calamity on the brother's head; he pours into the heart of Jacob a right spirit so that he may turn the wrath of Esau into feelings of peace. There is much wisdom displayed in all the plans of Jacob; humbled and subdued he uses the language best calculated to pacify his brother; it is, "Thy servant," and "My lord;" and they meet as friends. The prayer though long and importunate was answered. God requires this spirit, and *will* finally yield to it. We must be—

" Watching, waiting, hoping, yearning,
With the lamp well trimmed and burning."

The sign given to Jacob convinced him of God's approbation of his faith and perseverance, and showed him how frail man was in his own strength.

The Prayer as recorded.—Genesis xxxii.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee :

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant ; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan ; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau : for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

The Answer.—Genesis xxxiii.

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him : and they wept.

ISRAEL'S PRAYER FOR GOD'S BLESSING ON JOSEPH,
EPHRAIM, AND MANASSEH.

Joseph was the long-expected son of Rachel, the wife of Jacob, or Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh

were Joseph's children, and the scene in which the following prayer is introduced is one of peculiar interest to the believer, and will teach him to trust more firmly in the promises of God. The feebleness of old age had stolen over the form of the patriarch Jacob; his sight is dimmed by time, but the eyes of his soul look out clearly, through the shadows of the future, far into a "glorious day," in a coming age. The life of the old man is drawing to a close. He had suffered as one suffers to whom God gives deep and strong affections, but through all his trials he had learned, "the foolishness of God was wiser than men, and *his* weakness stronger;" his hand, like every human hand, had clasped *some* fleeting shadows, but it rested now where earth could never loosen it, in the firm grasp of the Almighty. Joseph, the wise, the *humble*, the *discreet*, the *attractive* son of the never-forgotten Rachel, has come with his children to receive a father's blessing, a father's parting words ere he sleeps in death. Guided by heaven the hand of Jacob rests first on the head of the younger as he asks the protecting care of God to be over and above the loved ones before him; he prays that they may inherit the privileges and walk in the footsteps of their progenitors, and that the name Israel, that name of so much import, might descend upon them, and they might be raised to their hereditary rank and honor. God guided the spirit of Jacob while he prayed,

taught him what to ask for, and *how* to ask; thus instructed he knew the will of God respecting those who were to come after him, the children of Rachel now kneeling before him. The patriarch's work is nearly over; in his dying hours his voice is raised to God, bearing testimony to others that the "angel" had redeemed his soul from evil—as he will the souls of all who call upon him with the faith of Jacob. A Christian deathbed, the last prayers of the dying believer are themes on which we love to linger, as we walk through the world. They strengthen our faith and encourage our tottering footsteps over its rough places. Teach us to pray on, pray ever, till our own day draw to a close, and our spirits rest,

"Like some deep lake upon a mountain summit,
High above cloud and storm of life like this,
All *peace* and *power*."

The Prayer as recorded.—Genesis xlviii.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel

.....
bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh :
and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die : but God shall
be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

PRAYER OF MOSES.

He who came this time in prayer was Moses, one whose spirit rested on God, who amidst the corruptions of an idolatrous court, and surrounded by worldly allurements, was still the meekest man. There shone a light in the heart of Moses which God had kindled there, one which taught him then as it has taught others since, the emptiness of earth's distinctions, and that true goodness alone is true greatness. Filled with contempt for honors that he knew could never satisfy his soul, trusting in God, Moses had quitted a high station in life, and retired to a quiet retreat, where he might the better cultivate his friendship towards God, and fulfill the designs of Providence in regard to his future. At the age of eighty he is invested with a high commission, and called to an enterprise which it required all his courage and energy to undertake. The burning bush in which the presence of the Lord was manifested to Moses at this time was emblematical ; it represented the state of the church in Egypt, in the midst of flames but *not* consumed, oppressed, but

not forgotten by the great *I Am*. Methinks all rashness in approaching God is here discouraged, while at the same time friendship is tendered to all who put aside worldliness, and come as all should who come to talk with the great Jehovah. The mercy-seat is holy ground; cast off thy jealousies, thy strife, thy pride, thy bitter feelings, and God will reveal himself to thee. Our friendship with the Almighty must be cultivated as was that of Moses; life is given us that we may not at its close first begin to know Him. We must learn early to *trust*, and if we remain steadfast we shall find him a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Moses, the trembler at Horeb, endured the presence of God forty days and nights in Sinai. As we have come more particularly to notice the nature of his petition at this time, we must carefully examine his feelings. There seems to have been a lurking of pride in the good man's breast, which to the careless observer might appear like humility; there is not an entire relinquishment of will to that of God, for perhaps the memory of Moses had treasured the question so rudely put to him forty long years back, by the same people he was now sent to teach, "who made thee a ruler?" He doubts the success of his undertaking, and calls upon his Father in heaven, while laboring under these doubts. At this time he does not seem willing to go out, not caring whither he went, because sent by the great Jehovah—who

bears with him, and in one short sentence exhibits the fullness of the Godhead, "I am that I am;" for this was the seal he gave to Moses, as he sent him to his afflicted people. The great God bears with our frowardness and often seems to overcome evil with good; doubting and irresolute, Moses urges difficulty after difficulty in this one thing he is called to perform; but God still showed patience and forbearance, promised to fill his mouth with arguments, and teach him what he should say. In the answer to this prayer we see the mercy of God is far above his judgments, even though his anger was kindled against Moses; Aaron his brother is brought out of Egypt—of whom it is written that could "speak well;" strengthened and stimulated by each other's prayers, they go on their way together, with their message from the great Jehovah.

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus iii.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

The Answer.—Exodus iii.

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

PRAYER OF MOSES FOR WATER FOR THE CHILDREN
OF ISRAEL.

We meet Moses at the time of this prayer marching with the hosts of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and still looking upward to that God who had led them thus far, whose stores are never exhausted, and whose love is boundless. Peevish and weary, the children of Israel complain bitterly to Moses; escaped from servitude, supplied with manna, led through the parted waters of the sea, they yet forget God, and now put to a severe trial the meekness and forbearance of their leader. But in this hour Moses forgets not his great Guide; he has a refuge when every other fails, and the rod which had bruised and broken Egypt is now used to restore the thirsty spirit of those murmuring children. God heard the prayer of Moses; the stream that flowed from that flinty rock accompanied their whole way through the wilderness; in it was a type of Him whose precious blood was shed for a dying race—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus xvii.

4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

The Answer.—Exodus xvii.

5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people

and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, where-with thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

PRAYER OF MOSES TO AVERT THE DIVINE ANGER.

Moses interceded for his people with an agony of mind; he would not descend from the mount till God had promised mercy, although the voice of that God had pronounced his people wicked and rebellious. In this prayer there is "the outgushing of a soul that lay near to the throne," the earnestness of one who feels the greatness and importance of his desire. With an idea of the possible desertion of the Almighty at this trying time, Moses refers to the promises made to the fathers, especially those which regarded the multitude of their race, and remembers that the Egyptians and the neighboring nations regarded the recent conflict as one testing the power of the God whom Israel trusted. He prays to "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Moses prayed with a faith that knew no doubt; his prayer prevailed, if not to

prevent God's displeasure at sin, at least to stay his hand in the punishment. The language in this answer is addressed to the understanding of men: "The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." Let us pause, fellow Christian, over a prayer that is represented as changing the purpose of Omnipotence; let us look into the heart of him who addresses the Almighty in behalf of his people; let us study and make our own a spirit that could thus move heaven. This is attainable; man, puny man, may have power with God, and prevail, when clinging to the mercy-seat. Far above the immediate desire of Moses was a regard for the honor of God's name; he was willing to become as it were *nothing*, so that the Lord would be honored, and Israel saved: there was a greatness of soul that only true faith could give—a *faith* which dictated prayers

"That could rend the clouds,
And rising through the dark of space,
Reach to God's central throne"—

a faith which gives to the soul of the believer a feeling of "oneness with God and heaven"

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus xxxii.

11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

The Answer.—Exodus xxxii.

14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

PRAYER OF MOSES WHEN THE PEOPLE MADE THE GOLDEN CALF.

The prophet still continues his intercession for his people Israel, after he has descended from the mount, where his last recorded prayer was made. The sound of revelry had struck the ear of the prophet on his way, and as he approached the scene of his people's wickedness, and beheld the golden calf, his heart was filled with a just anger—a holy indignation. Surely, methinks he says within himself, the Lord will not hear me on behalf of so great sin; my people merit the wrath of Jehovah—but I know the value of intercession. Moses begins his

petition with great tenderness; his "Oh, this people," shows us what was lying near his heart.

"One stream of light came to him from above,
And that was what he saw by, light of God."

It guided him to the throne again; it led him to Jehovah. The broken sentence in this petition brings before us the full heart of the prophet; he remembers the oft-repeated sins of his people; he bears them in his heart to that God, who is, he knows, a God of justice as well as mercy; he obtains a reprieve for the rebellious, but feels that iniquity will not go unpunished. It has been supposed by some that Moses was willing to renounce his own hope of salvation for what seemed to be to him the greater glory of God. In the language of another we would explain what we conceive to be the prophet's meaning: "Lord, if thy decree against this people may not be reversed, if justice demand their utter extermination, let mine eyes be just closed in peace, subject me not to the mortification of surviving all my nation, and of enduring the scorn of our enemies; rather take me out of the world, where I should lead a life of sorrow heavier than death itself."

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus xxxii.

31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them-gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

The Answer.—Exodus xxxii.

33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.

PRAYER OF MOSES THAT HE MAY SEE THE GLORY
OF THE LORD.

Moses still knew and felt the power of importunate prayer. God had granted favor after favor, and, encouraged, he still prays. God had hitherto given to Israel that symbol of his presence, the pillar of cloud and fire, but because of their sin and rebellion he has removed it and left them to choose out their own paths. The thought of being deserted by the Almighty, of being estranged from him who had led them thus far, filled the soul of Moses with sorrow. He knew his people had deservedly lost the favor of God, but he earnestly pleads the return of it, pleads like one who will not be denied; his prayer is full of love to Israel and zeal for the honor of God; it is one that prevailed; his spirit was calmed by the divine answer; the promise, "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest," encouraged Moses; he would still inquire and

implore knowledge of the Most High. The believing soul is never satisfied with present attainments in divine life. Moses had not forgotten the glory displayed to him in the bush at Horeb, the still more awful glory at Sinai, his close communion when in the tabernacle; he had met the Lord as it were face to face, but he has the spirit of an earnest seeker; he has the desire which angels are not reproved for indulging—a desire to see more of the glory of the Almighty. Man in his present state could never bear a *full* discovery of the glory of God; to have been answered according to the letter of his desire would have proved fatal to the prophet. The Lord returns an answer suitable to his condition; he shows his glory to him by filling his soul with a sense of his *goodness*, points out to him what was presumptuous in his prayer and approves what was right. God holds back, in compassion to our weakness, the face of his throne, and draws before it his cloud, as if to shield us from its too dazzling glory; our mortal eyes could never behold it and live. He covers us with his protecting hand while he is passing by, and his presence can only be known by the tokens he leaves in every renewed heart—a heart which will ever be bursting with the desire expressed in this prayer of the prophet, to know more of the glory of the Lord. To enjoy the vision of God's goodness as it passed by, Moses re-ascended the mount to draw nigh to God; he went

to meet him as a friend—one that could protect him from himself as from his worst enemy. “Man, imperfect, is momentarily sinning.” There is provided a cleft in the rock for every soul—a refuge of safety; it is a type of Him who is a covert from the tempest, and a hiding-place from the storm.

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus xxxiii.

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. ■

The Answer.—Exodus xxxiii.

14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

The Prayer continued.—Exodus xxxiii.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

The Answer.

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

The Prayer.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

The Answer.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

PRAYER OF MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI.

According to the command of the Lord, Moses ascended the mount, with the tables of stone. In his haste he had broken those which contained the law, and the first token of God's reconciliation to Israel was his renewal of them. Moses remained in the mount forty days and nights, in close communion with God, who at this time granted him a special manifestation of his holy presence—"And the Lord passed by before him;" the prophet bowed his

head to the earth and worshiped. His prayer was affectionate and earnest; his people needed the presence of the Lord; the prophet implored help and strength from heaven to guide them; for they had become stiff-necked, and trials and sorrow have ever been lightened by prayer.

“God, for thy glory only can I act,
And for thy creatures’ good.
When creatures stray
Farthest from thee, as these have done,
Remember them in mercy.”

The prophet knew God would not reject his prayer, though breathed from earthly lips; he remembered the promises made to him, but they did not supersede the necessity of prayer, they encouraged and directed him in his approach to the Being who alone could grant the *first* and *greatest* desire of his heart. Moses was permitted to hold communion with the Lord for forty days and nights; it was no wonder he should bear some visible mark of this high and holy fellowship with the Father of lights. He was himself unconscious that he bore about with him the evidence that he had been with God. It is so in some measure, dear reader, with every prayerful person; we know him when he is near, his face is full of the beauty shining out from a Christian heart; we *know* him, the *friend* of God; the world can never hide him, though his path may be among the meek and lowly. No one can come from com-

munion with God without breathing on all around him the sweet breath of charity and gentleness; his face will shine out with love to his fellow man, and the wicked will not be able to bear the light of his countenance, for it shines brightly with the beauty of holiness. This petition of Moses was granted, for the Lord promised to make a covenant with Israel; the sun stood still, in its course in the heavens, the waters of Jordan were dried, and marvelous things were done in the earth, according to the answer of the Lord.

The Prayer as recorded.—Exodus xxxiv.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshiped.

9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

The Answer.—Exodus xxxiv.

10 And he said, Behold I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

A PRAYER OF MOSES FOR THE SCATTERING OF THE
LORD'S ENEMIES.

The breathing of Moses' desire at this time was prophetic, for the enemies of the Lord were then and ever have been hasting to their own destruction. After the Israelites had remained a year at Sinai, they again commenced their march towards Canaan; they took with them the ark of the covenant of the Lord, by which their communion with him was to be kept up; when the ark set forward this prayer was made by Moses, and followed by another when it rested. The prophet asks of the Lord success for his people abroad, and rest at home, that his powerful hand may scatter the enemies of his cause, and that all that hate him may flee before him. We are taught the useful lesson in these prayers, to commit our way unto the Lord, and everything in which the church, the Israel of God, is interested, claims the earnest and sincere petition of every Christian. Prayer should precede our going out and should follow our coming in; then will

“Our way appear, steps unto heaven :—
All that thou sendest us in mercy given,”

and ever, in the changing scenes of life, the cloudy pillar shall be our Guide; we shall be fed with food from heaven, and drink from the smitten rock—from that stream which alone can satisfy.

Earth's cup is poisoned ;
Her renown most infamous ; her gold,
Seem as it may, is only dust ;
Her gain, eternal loss ; her hope, a dream ;
Her love, her friendship, enmity with God."

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers x.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered ; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

PRAYER OF MOSES WHEN THE PEOPLE WEEP FOR
FLESH TO EAT.

The history of Israel is truly the history of human nature in all ages of the world ; man is ever peevish and complaining till his own stubborn will is brought into submission with that of his God. Moses, weary and sorrowful at the ingratitude of his people, again poured his grief into that ear which is ever open. In their discontent the people are looking back to Egypt, and forward with distrust to the promised land ; their souls had no relish for what they called the light food which God had in kindness bestowed ; the stream that followed them from the rock was to them no water at all, and Israel shed tears of discontent and passion. Moses at this time

seems to feel that his people are unfitted for the vocation to which they have been called, and there is a more than usual fainting of his strong spirit; his resource is the one never failing, ever calming; it is *prayer*; there is in his heart no distrust of *God*, but a consciousness of his own weakness in guiding this people. The Almighty showed great pity towards Moses, heard every sigh, saw every tear, sympathized with him in his weakness, and sent to his aid seventy elders, upon whom was poured a portion of that spirit which had led the prophet thus far in his way.

“God is great and God is just,
He knoweth the hearts of
The children of dust:
He is the helper; in Him I trust.”

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers xi.

11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?

13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.

14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

The Answer.—Numbers xi.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee that thou bear it not thyself alone.

18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days:

20 But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

PRAYER OF MOSES AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE
LORD WILL GIVE THE PEOPLE FLESH TO EAT.

God had promised in answer to the last prayer of Moses to send a sufficient quantity of food to supply his people; the largeness of his promise startles Moses, for the supply was not for a day, or even ten,

but for a whole month, and this too for six hundred thousand footmen. We will quote from an intelligent traveler a short passage, for it will the better enable us to comprehend the spirit in which the prayer now under consideration was made: "No reflection forced itself upon me so often or so urgently as the utter and universal inaptitude of that country for the sustenance of animal life; it really seemed to possess no element favorable to human existence besides a pure air, and no present appearances favor the idea that it was ever any better. I am filled with wonder that so many travelers should task their ingenuity to get clear of the miracles which, according to the narrative of Moses, were wrought to facilitate the journey of that vast host, for they could not have subsisted three days without supernatural resources." The quiet and mild rebuke to Moses, in the Lord's answer, encourages us to come to him with every desire, however impossible it may seem in its fulfillment, so long as it springs from love to God; "His arm is not shortened that it cannot save." Let us ask great things, then, for Israel. Are his people hungering and thirsting? the Lord has plenty and to spare. Are they languishing and drooping? the Lord's spirit can revive them. Prayer, persevering prayer, will come from a heart that truly feels for the afflicted people of God; we have only to implore the great Giver, as did Moses, and the supply will be forth-

coming. The children of Israel had inordinately desired the meat the Lord promised to give; he therefore made it by its quantity loathsome to them. It is ever thus with man, in his desires greedily pursuing a fancied good, covetous and over-anxious to acquire this or that, and if he obtain, and find the possession cloy, yet he turns to another object, still to pursue, still to be disappointed.

“Sweet world!

We all still cling to thee, though thou thyself
Passest away.”

The spirit severed from its God is ever longing, ever restless, for some imagined good, forgetful that “the heart must shed its pleasures, as the eye its tears.” Let our desires come, then, from a heart full of love to God, but let the measure of them and their fulfillment be of the Lord.

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers xi.

21 And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

The Answer.—Numbers xi.

23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

PRAYER OF MOSES FOR MIRIAM.

The sister of Moses, for whom this prayer was made, was a person of much interest, although under the present circumstances her conduct was highly blamable, and called forth the indignation of God. The part she enacted in the preservation of Moses, in his infancy, from the waters of the Nile, her tenderness and care attach us to her. We suppose Miriam a woman of much personal beauty—the “chief lady of Israel,” but possessed of vehemence of spirit and much vanity. The affliction for which Moses prayed had been sent upon her as a punishment in speaking rashly of the prophet of the Lord. Her heart was filled with jealousy towards Zipporah, whom Moses had chosen for a wife, and whom Miriam feared might usurp her rights or rule over her. Aaron was guilty of the same sin as his sister, but she was the first in the transgression, and no doubt excited him by her rashness. God punished Miriam in a way which made her feel more deeply than anything else could have done, and as we hear nothing further of her history, we infer her days were passed in the only true sphere of woman, *in quiet*. We are led to confess that woman is capable of doing far more good and far more evil than man; even when she is imagined pure and spotless, her heart, more than man’s, may be the home of the

very worst as well as the best passions. Men are, to outward appearance, either the one thing or the other—good or bad; a keen observer is seldom deceived; a woman to the world's eye is always good, till by some outward, flagrant act she proves herself otherwise. This prayer of Moses exhibits a spirit of meekness and forbearance which everywhere in his history stamps his character. In the jealousy shown by his brother and sister he suffered one of the most bitter trials with which God's children are called to strive; he had hitherto been supported in all his movements by his own family, but he is now the subject of resentment from those *nearest* to him, but the Lord heard it, heard all their taunts, and stood ready to defend the prophet; he says to them, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" In this leader of Israel we have an instance of continuance in well-doing; we find him pursuing the path of duty, "enduring, as seeing him who is invisible," "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," holding close communion with his Maker, and drawing strength to fulfill, with meekness and submission, his duties, from that source which alone can supply it, submitting to insult, returning good for evil, and praying for those who so despitely used him; yes, in his own words, "his mother's children were angry," those, too, who were eminent in religion, bitterly

assailed him. We are here taught another lesson of the frailty of human nature, its liability to be drawn into sin ; it should teach us to cultivate the spirit of Moses, to bear with the faults of God's children, nor to condemn or speak rashly of those whom He has called—remembering we are all sinful, erring beings. Let us take with us that charity which seeks rather to hide than to expose the weaknesses of others.

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers xii.

13 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

The Answer.—Numbers xii.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days ? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.

15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days ; and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

PRAYER OF MOSES THAT THE PEOPLE MAY NOT BE SMITTEN WITH PESTILENCE.

This humble intercession of Moses exhibits him still as a type of Christ, praying and pleading for his persecutors. The prophet does not offer any excuse for the sins of his people, but he feels that if the Lord consume them, the story of their destruc-

tion would not, by those who knew not God, be attributed to him as an act of justice, but gloried in as a shortening of that arm that had hitherto delivered them; he is jealous for the glory of God; he would not have the power of the Almighty questioned; hence his plea, "Let the power of my Lord be great." Three of the attributes of Jehovah are brought up by the prophet to urge him to listen to his request—his goodness, his mercy, and his willingness to forgive, all of which had been shown in times past towards his sinful people. His fervent prayer prevailed with God, who had threatened at this time to destroy them with pestilence, and make of Moses himself a mighty nation; their doom is respited in answer to the fervent appeal. "They were indeed to perish in the wilderness, but *not yet*; forty years were the adults to wander, and gradually die out, never to enter or see the promised land; cowardly, distrustful, and enfeebled by bondage, the fathers should be succeeded by their children, trained up under the institutions God had given them, moulded under them into a nation, and strengthened into manly character under the freedom which had been so triumphantly won for them."* The only survivors of all the children of Israel who were to live to enter Canaan were Caleb and Joshua. The spirit of the former is particularly spoken of

* Dr. Kitto.

as a new spirit, one which led him to "follow the Lord fully;" he was assured of inheriting the promise, "Him will I bring in due time into the land whereinto he went;"—it was a spirit differing from that which loves the world and the fleeting things of it—a spirit which leads to prayer.

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers xiv.

13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee shall speak, saying,

16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

18 The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

The Answer.—Numbers xiv.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word :

21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice ;

23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it :

24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went ; and his seed shall possess it.

PRAYER OF MOSES THAT THE LORD WOULD SET A
MAN OVER THE CONGREGATION.

Moses was now under sentence of condemnation ; he was not permitted to pass over Jordan ; from the hour he fell under the displeasure of God, and which shortened the date of his life, we realize that he is not only a prophet but a man of like passions with ourselves ; sometimes we hear him entreating the Lord to permit him to pass into the goodly land, and then again quietly resigning himself to the will of God, now manifesting a love of life, and then vindicating the righteous judgment of God in the punishment of his transgression. The prayer under

our present notice was no personal appeal; the soul of the prophet was full of desire for Israel; he seems to lose sight of self, and prays as one who earnestly wished the advancement of God's cause, and the eternal welfare of his people. Humble-minded, he seems willing to see himself abased and others exalted, if so be the glory of the Lord is acknowledged. Joshua, a man of unshaken fidelity and singular piety, is brought before us; in answer to the prophet's prayer, God was pleased to appoint him as the leader of Israel, to finish the work of Moses, and introduce his children to their inheritance. There is no murmuring word from the prophet as he sees his dignity about to rest upon another; he prays for one that might lead his flock as a faithful shepherd. Joshua was taken to his heart as a friend and brother. How unlike the spirit of the world is that displayed by the prophet; how rarely do we see one who can rejoice over the exaltation of inferiors, even when such advancement is for the glory of God! How will jealousy exhibit itself to one who knows the evil of his own natural heart, when its possessor is unconscious of it! How it breathes itself in the bitter sarcasm, the whispered reproach, the fault-finding spirit, towards the exalted one, who, instead of being taken to the heart as a better instrument in working for God, is cast aside and hated as an enemy! Moses, in the answer to his prayer, is commanded to cause Joshua to stand

before Eleazar the priest; the form of laying on of hands was one recommended by divine authority, and of significant simplicity. The words, "Thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him," imply that Moses should be associated with Joshua and enjoy the satisfaction of beholding one who would, acting with him and with the same spirit, conduct the affairs of the people. In this petition of Moses we have again a striking exhibition of his meekness.

The Prayer as recorded.—Numbers xxvii.

15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh; set a man over the congregation,

17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

The Answer.—Numbers xxvii.

18 And the LORD said unto Moses, take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

20 And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

PRAYER OF JOSHUA.

Joshua was anointed with the unction of the Divine spirit, and, like Moses, sought for strength and guidance from God, to fit him for the right discharge of the duties of the high station to which he had been called. The Lord, in infinite justice, had sent defeat to the hitherto successful arms of Israel, and as a punishment for the covetousness of Achan, had caused them to flee before the men of Ai; their loss was comparatively small, yet as a military man Joshua felt the effects of the defeat deeply; he also knew it was a rebuke from God; the people felt it also, and, in the expressive language of Scripture, "The hearts of the people melted and became as water." Joshua with bowed head inquired of the Lord, while he expressed sorrow and humiliation for the present condition of his charge. Dejected, he lay before the ark in prayer, till evening, when he was informed that Israel could not prosper while "the accursed thing remained among them, and is told the way and means of its discovery. Achan acknowledges his sin—he had for the goodly garment and the wedge of gold, brought trouble upon Israel, and exposed his own soul to danger. The conduct of Joshua on the discovery of Achan's sin, as well as his prayer, is worthy of our serious notice; there is no bitter denunciation in his words;

no harshness of manner, but sorrow for his sin: "Why hast thou troubled us?" he says, and leads him to acknowledge the justice of God, in punishing those who sinned against Israel. When he approaches him it is tenderly, and the words "My son, tell me what thou hast done," methinks, should be borne in the heart and on the lips of all Christian ministers at the present day; human nature is perverse and resistant; the bitter denunciation will never lead a man to confess his sins, even if they are clear to his eye and lie heavy on his soul. One of our old poets has said, "When man ceases to justify himself, then it is the last extremity of evil." Conceit is the last passion that dies out in the soul when God's love enters it; its death too is gradual—so gradual, that often in the heart of the believer, we see it welling up and troubling the clear waters of truth. Go, then, Christian teacher, tenderly to the sinner; remember the pit from which thou hast been taken; go gently to warn, to admonish, to caution; teach that God is a Father, a Friend; implant this feeling, and the heart will learn to fear as well as love him.

The Prayer as recorded.—Joshua vii.

6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the

hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan!

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

The Answer.—Joshua vii.

10 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

PRAYER OF HANNAH.

An all-wise Jehovah sees fit to try his children in the school of affliction; these trials are as varied as their disposition and temperament; each one is brought through the waters by the way best fitted to purify his or her heart, and is attacked in those desires which separate him from his God. There are few even of those who are the professed children of the Most High, but are still waiting for, still pursuing some object which they fancy will increase their happiness. God does not reprove us for these desires, if their attainment is the advancement of his glory; he rather encourages us to express to him every want of our hearts. The prayer before us is a striking example of clearness and precision in the subject matter, of *confidence* and *reliance* on the great Hearer; it was made by Hannah, the memoirs of whose life comprehend but a few years, indeed embrace only this *prayer* and its *answer*, with the attendant circumstances. The wife of a distinguished servant of God, who loved and appreciated her, and surrounded by comfort and competence, she was conscious of one desire ungratified, a want in her bosom ungratified—a want which was rendered a *bitter sorrow* by the taunts of a rival, who triumphed over her with the evil spirit of an enemy; human nature is weak and erring, and we see this

godly woman disturbed in mind, her devotional feelings ruffled and fretted by her adversary. We doubt not but Hannah had made her peculiar trial a frequent subject of prayer; but we observe much selfishness mingled in her desires, and perhaps she had a rebellious feeling against the will of the Almighty. We remark, however, under all the disturbed feelings of Hannah a quiet, steady walk in the path of duty, and we read of her going up yearly with her household, to offer the required sacrifices to God at the appointed Shiloh. The discipline through which she passed purified her spirit, and taught her to bear her burden of sorrow in silence. As she sat quietly during the feast in Shiloh, her tears flowed fast and free, and afterward she poured out her soul to God in prayer. A descendant of Abraham, one in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, she had the covenant of Abraham to plead; this strengthened the particular desire of her heart—a desire she possessed in common with all Hebrew women. She came with earnestness to God, and asked for a son, not that she might rid herself of the taunts of her rival, or enjoy him selfishly, but that she might dedicate him to the worship and service of the God of Israel, not for a time, but for his life; to the prayer is added her vow to consecrate him whom God would send, to a life of purity and holiness. A trial awaited Hannah even at her hour of prayer, for, unmind-

ful of the presence of man, and communing with heaven, she poured out her full soul into an ear that always listens; hers was the language of strong faith in and hope towards God, the exertion of a soul struggling to free itself of a burden that was oppressing and overcoming it; and well was it that God saw not as man saw, else the heart of Hannah would not have been full of the peace with which she rose from that prayer. The charge of Eli was not even repelled in anger, gross as it was to the sensitive mind of Hannah; calm, in conscious innocence, she felt as every true believer always feels when charged falsely. "If God justifieth, who is he that condemneth." Her soul was fortified by prayer, and she stood ready for any attack; the joy in her heart shone out in all her after conduct, "and she was no more sad." There is great fullness in the expressions in this prayer; God is addressed as the Lord of Hosts, who has the universe with its myriads at his sovereign disposal; there is in it deep humility—not the language of one who fancies himself heard for his much speaking, but the feeling of a sinner in the presence of a just God. The desire of Hannah's heart was gratified, and a son was granted. Prayer does not always bring, as it did with this godly woman, the blessing solicited, but it brings its best answer in a will perfectly submissive to that of the Almighty. Were our specified desires always granted they might bring many a sorrow

now happily averted. While, then, we are encouraged by this prayer to whisper our wants in the ear of God, let us leave them to his wisdom, let us be careful to have them regulated by his love, and be satisfied with the hope, that all things work together for good to them that love God.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Samuel i.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

The Answer.—1 Samuel i.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the LORD.

PRAYER OF SAMUEL.

The child Samuel, the memorial of a mother's prayer, the living witness of the blessed truth, that God will hear and answer sincere and earnest petition, is now an old man, and through his whole character we trace the wisdom and fortitude imparted to him by the guidance of his excellent and godly mother. The time has come with Samuel when the

"Eye dims, the lithe limbs stiffen,
The sun-hued locks thin themselves
Off, or whitely wither."

But his heart is quick to feel, and his prayers as fervent as when first he lisped them to his God. He cannot now as formerly watch over the interests of the whole country, or make his accustomed circuit through the land; he therefore appointed his sons to relieve him, and put them in his place at Bathsheba. At the time of this appointment they were no doubt fitted for it, for we hear no word of censure from God or man, but we find them afterward wandering from their father's ways, their hearts bound with "the leaden chains of that dull lust, a love of gain." The elders of Israel plead this sin as an excuse for their request to Samuel to give them a king. It is not because a holy God is grieved by the sin of the sons of Samuel, but it is

because of the injury done their temporal interests that they make this request. Samuel, who had been faithful over Israel and an instrument in God's hand of much good, was grieved at the ingratitude of the people, but does not attempt to answer them in his own strength, or rely on his own judgment; he prays to the God of wisdom to guide him in his reply. The people do not murmur or even propose the name of any to fill the place; and this is indeed a noted fact, for it is the only recorded instance of a public determination to appoint a king, and no name proposed. We know these people were sure the law of Moses was from God, but it is probable they were tired of being ruled by those raised by God to reform religion, and though they respect Samuel, their desire to be great and powerful in the eyes of other nations seems to be their motive in asking of Samuel a king to reign over them. The answer of the Lord to Samuel's prayer leads us to infer the request of the people was improper.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Samuel viii.

1 And it came to pass when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel: and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba.

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

The Lord's Answer.

7 And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

PRAYER OF SAMUEL FOR A THUNDER STORM IN
TIME OF WHEAT HARVEST.

A shower of rain was an uncommon occurrence in that country during wheat harvest, and the answer to the following prayer was calculated to produce conviction, and alarm the people. Terrified with the power of God displayed in the thunder-storm, and fearful of some immediate judgment of God, they saw, in answer to Samuel's prayer,

“The sky grow darker ; then came booming on
The deep-voiced thunder, while at distance rolled
The wild wind’s dirge-like and yet tempest tone ;
And lightning’s evanescent sheets of gold
Burst in their anger from the cloud’s dark fold.”

With one united cry the people call upon Samuel to pray to the Lord God Almighty. Pray, say they, that we die not ; pray, for we have added sin to sin ; we have desired a king when God hath chosen other government for us ; but we acknowledge the power of the God who speaks in the thunder and rides upon the storm.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Samuel xii.

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 Is it not wheat harvest to-day ? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain ; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18 So Samuel called unto the Lord.

The Lord’s Answer.

18 And the LORD sent thunder and rain that day : and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

PRAYER OF DAVID UNDER TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES.

David was at this time an inspired writer of the Holy Scriptures; yet the Lord spoke to him by his prophet and then by the high priest, for the honor of his own institutions. Saul had neglected the protection of Israel, and the depredations of the Philistines were extremely distressing. David is called in the Scriptures the man after God's own heart; and it is with feelings of peculiar interest we review his prayers; they are songs from the "sweet singer of Israel," and come from the heart of him whose life was one of deep devotedness to God and his cause. In his youth he says, "Thou art my trust," and in age, "Now when I am old and gray-headed, O Lord, forsake me not." A man of prayer, we find him always at the mercy-seat in times of trial or of rejoicing. From the throne of God came down the strength that filled this good man's heart. When David could not divine clearly his duty, as in the present instance, he called to the high priest to put on the Urim and Thummim, and by him asked God to direct him in all his decisions.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Samuel xxiii.

1 Then they told David, saying, Behold the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors.

2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines?

The Lord's Answer.—1 Samuel xxiii.

2 And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

David continues his prayer.—1 Samuel xxiii.

10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant.

The Lord's Answer.—1 Samuel xxiii.

11 And the LORD said, He will come down.

David still prays.—1 Samuel xxiii.

12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?

The Lord's Answer.—1 Samuel xxiii.

12 And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

PRAYER OF DAVID WHEN THE AMALEKITES HAD INVADED ZIKLAG.

Ziklag was distant from the camp of the Philistines about three days' march, and David did not receive an authentic account of the battle at Gilboa till two days after his return thither. The Lord

had delivered him from his ensnaring connection with Achish, but his conduct had not been entirely free from deceit while connected with him; he found it difficult to avoid all insincerity, and from fear or courtesy had been disingenuous in his intercourse with the king. God severely rebuked him for his conduct, by the calamity that befell Ziklag in his absence. David's fear of offending Achish had induced him to leave the city without placing a proper guard over the inhabitants; but the Amalekites were wonderfully restrained from destroying any of them, after the example which David had set them; in this God showed his intention to rebuke David alone, but protect his family and friends. His wives were led into captivity, and David and the people shed bitter and sorrowful tears over the destruction made in the city by the devouring flame. In this deep sorrow David remembers the Lord his God—remembers the promises and encouragements he gives to his children to call upon him in trouble, and immediately consults him by the high priest.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Samuel xxx.

8 And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?

The Lord's Answer.—1 Samuel xxx.

8 And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

PRAYER OF DAVID AND THANKSGIVING.

One of the first acts of David's reign was to place the ark in the tabernacle in the presence of all the people; it was he that collected the priests and Levites, and bade them, morning and evening, remember the Lord their God, and offer their daily sacrifices to Him who had created and sustained them; it was he who first taught them unitedly to chant his praises in the tabernacle, and in every house and cottage in Israel were sung the hymns of David. The time will come when it may be said of their sweet strains—

“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

In this prayer he seems to remember God's continued goodness to him, and how wonderfully he has been led from the “mountain fold” to the royal throne. As he sits in the tabernacle whither he had gone to pray, he tells the Lord the thoughts of his heart, and pours out his thanksgiving to him; he also reiterates God's promises to him, by which the Lord had connected the glory of his own truth with the establishment of David's family, that those who came after him might walk in the path of salvation, and work for the cause of God in the world.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Samuel vii.

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O LORD God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O LORD God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O LORD God?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, LORD God, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

PRAYER OF DAVID AS HE WENT WEeping UP THE MOUNT OF OLIVET.

Ahithophel, who is mentioned in this prayer, was a man of great ability. David feared more from him than from the whole number of Absalom's followers; he had just heard of his uniting himself to the conspirators, and his heart is grieved. This feeling is caught by the people, and a mourning, weeping multitude are slowly ascending the mountain. David felt himself guilty in God's sight for the misery he had brought on himself and people, and, humbled under the hand of God, his expressions of sorrow are deep, while with bowed head and tearful eyes he makes the request contained in his prayer. He knows the God of Israel can turn the wisdom of the wise man into foolishness, and render the might of the strong man powerless. Hushai was an intimate friend of David's; he was from Archi, a town on the southern border of Ephraim; he is made the instrument in defeating the counsel of Ahithophel, in answer to the prayer of David.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Samuel xv.

30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Samuel xv.

32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

2 Samuel xvii.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

PRAYER OF DAVID AFTER HIS TRANSGRESSION IN
NUMBERING ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

When we consider the character of David, and hear him spoken of as "the man after God's own heart," we are apt to forget he was, like ourselves, human and imperfect. In some of the acts of David's life, even after his conversion, there is sad evidence of natural corruption; pride, vanity, and deceit are still in his heart. We know these hateful passions were not nourished by him, and cannot be by one who, like him, daily waits on his God. This is an encouragement to Christians struggling with the deep-rooted malady in their own hearts, and ought to fill them with a joyful hope that at the last they will come off more than conquerors through him who loved them. It should awaken for the whole world that loving charity which "thinketh no evil," and though all about us there are wandering children from the fold of God, yet they may, like David, be struggling in prayer, their lives be a warfare against sin and Satan, and theirs that sorrow for which nothing but prayer, deep and fervent, is an antidote. Now what was the sin David committed in numbering the people? Some have thought it a contempt of God's promise that they should be innumerable, and that, as in the days of Moses, he should have been expressly commanded by God to

do this; but we think it an evidence of pride in David. Elated with the prosperity and extent of his dominions, he evinced a complacency natural to those who have been eminently successful; there seems to be also an ambitious curiosity to discover how many of his people were fit for service; and with the like feeling, indulged by many an aged man, after a life of prosperity and success, he would have it said he had left a populous and flourishing kingdom to posterity. But these feelings of David called forth the displeasure of his God; pride and worldly ambition were still in his heart, and by chastisement from the Lord they must be subdued.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Samuel xxiv.

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Samuel xxiv.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite.

PRAYER OF SOLOMON FOR WISDOM.

Solomon the son of David had succeeded his father as ruler of Israel. Being young and inexperienced, he had, no doubt, felt his need of great wisdom, to fill with honor and justice the position in which he was placed; his mind had been filled with his own weakness, so that when the Lord appeared to him in a vision at Gibeon and asked the desire of his heart, Solomon was ready to ask for a supply of heavenly wisdom such as God only could bestow on man. The spirit of this prayer is commended by God, and is especially worthy of note to those who are in high places of position or power; Solomon asks not for wealth, long life or particular earthly distinction, but wisdom to guide and direct his people in the fear of that God whom

his father David had so much loved and honored. He would be "strong in the spirit," "deep-thoughted," clear-eyed,

"To walk step for step, with an angel beside,
On the heaven heights of truth."

From that fountain of living waters, "the wish to know, that endless thirst," must be satisfied; as the fountain is pure, so will the waters be; and would you be wise, come hither and drink.

"The clouds may drop down titles and estates,
Wealth may seek *us*, but *wisdom* must be *sought*."

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings iii.

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

The Answer.—1 Kings iii.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment:

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

1 Kings iv.

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men.

THE PRAYER OF SOLOMON AT THE DEDICATION OF
THE TEMPLE.

“It seemed as if a temple rose
Before me brightly there,
And in the depths of its repose,
My soul o'erflowed with prayer.”

“Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice.

Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold,
Reared for thy presence ; therefore am I bound
To worship."

About a year after the completion of the temple, the ark of the covenant was placed in it, so that in a peculiar manner it became the abode of Jehovah in the midst of Israel. It was now to be dedicated to the service and worship of the living God. A large multitude of worshiping Israelites, and of the chiefs and heads of the tribes had assembled to witness the scene, and unite in the solemn prayer of Solomon. The temple was the visible pledge of God's presence with his people, as long as they adhered to his ordinances and loved his commandments. In pleading with God in this prayer Solomon was a type of Christ. The Lord has said, "The silver and the gold are mine," and freely had it been brought to the temple, to add to its beauty and enlarge its walls; but Solomon reminds the people, that heaven, with its boundless shore, could not contain the Lord of all, much less this temple made with hands; the ark might abide within its walls, and God would be in the midst of those who came thither to worship and love him, but his presence would still fill immensity, and "God be everywhere." In the "temple" He has however "recorded his name," and the Israelites were to advert to it in all their prayers; when they jour-

neyed far distant from Jerusalem their faces were turned to it, as an evidence their hearts were with its worshipers; and when near it they forsook not the assembling of themselves together. This prayer of Solomon's is one of the most heartfelt and beautiful in the Bible, and the spiritual reader will find it highly suggestive. We are satisfied it was an out-pouring of Solomon's spirit to God, suggested by the occasion.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings viii.

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven :

23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart :

24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him : thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel ; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

26 And now O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ?

28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and

to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day :

29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there : that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place : and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place : and when thou hearest, forgive.

31 If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house :

32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head ; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

33 When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house :

34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee ; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them :

36 Then hear thou in heaven and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

37 If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

38 What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:

39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest: (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

40 That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake;

42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house;

43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

44 If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shall send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:

45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;

47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name :

49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause.

50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them :

51 For they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron :

52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.

53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven

The Lord's Answer.—1 Kings ix.

3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me : I have hal-

lowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments :

5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

THE PROPHET'S PRAYER FOR THE RESTORATION OF JEROBOAM'S WITHERED HAND.

Jeroboam had neglected to worship God at the temple, and wickedly built another altar at Bethel, and while a prophet—"a man of God out of Judah," was prophesying against the altar, the king stretched forth his hand to lay it violently upon him, and by a sudden interposition of Providence it became withered. The suffering man thus thwarted in his resolve, entreats that the prophet would pray that his hand might be restored; he would have him pray to the Lord *his* God. We see by this request his confidence in his idols and his self-invented sacrifices was shaken. The sudden judgment and the rending of the altar had produced conviction in him, and he knows nothing but prayer to the Lord God of the prophet will avail. After the prayer and

restoration we hear no thankful strain from Jeroboam's lips to the God who had restored him; a sense of gratitude to the prophet is evinced by his offer of hospitality for the present, and a reward in the future; here let the reader pause for a moment, and consider how like the world is the conduct of Jeroboam, how often, like him, is one the recipient of God's favor, but no word of thankfulness is heard. One is, perhaps the object of God's mercy in some special deliverance from evil, but there is no upward glancing of the eye, no lifting of the voice of thanksgiving to heaven. "Pensioner of God be grateful; let thy full heart pour out its treasure of thanks to Him who has sent the blessing."

"A wicked man scorneth prayer; in the shallow sophistry of reason,

He derideth the silly hope that God can be moved by supplication;

But I *knew* that his reasonings were false, for the promise of the Scripture is *true*."

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings xiii.

6 And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place.

THE POWER OF EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER.

He who makes the following prayer is Elijah the Tishbite ; his name signifies "The Lord my God is He." He was raised up under the reign of the most wicked king of Israel, and his introduction to our notice on the Scripture page is rather abrupt. Ahab had probably been repeatedly warned by Elijah to forsake his idols and worship God, but he scorned the admonition. To show him the power of prayer, and give him an uncontrovertible proof that he would be heard and answered, he asks that the Lord will send neither dew nor rain for the space of some years, and not until he again prayed for it, should it come upon the earth. We find the answer to this prayer recorded in the New Testament. Doubtless the prophet was instructed by the Lord to offer this petition ; and to some it may seem a strange request to make in prayer. The glory of God and the interests of true religion were concerned in it, however, and there is much of wise zeal as well as true benevolence in it. The benefit of the calamity on the minds of apostate Israel would far outweigh the misery attending it. Elijah was a most distinguished servant of God, and endowed with extraordinary gifts for the purpose of exciting a hardened generation.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings xvii.

1 And Elijah said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

The Answer.—James v.

17 And it rained not by the space of three years and six months.

18 And Elijah prayed again, and the heaven gave rain; and the earth brought forth her fruit.

THE PRAYER OF ELIJAH FOR THE RESTORATION OF
THE WIDOW'S SON.

Never before had a prayer like this ever been made and answered; and well might the mother, as the good man called upon Him who only could answer, be confirmed in her faith, and praise the Lord God of Israel. There lay all that remained of one who was once dear; the soul, the living, breathing power, that had once dwelt in it, was no longer there; and the expression in the prayer of the prophet, "Let the soul come into this body again," proves to us its complete separation at death. It is when gazing at such a scene as the prayer presents, that we are furnished with an argument, the hardest and most unbelieving are forced to admit, for the immortality of the human soul.

The mother for whose child Elijah prays was a widow, and he had dwelt with her and been miraculously sustained during the famine consequent upon the dry weather which followed his prayer. It appears he was in the house of this woman when her son died. She had been a worshiper of Baal in by-gone days, but seems to have been convinced of God's power, as manifested in the drouth in answer to prayer, and from her language to Elijah we infer she imagined this heavy affliction was sent upon her in consequence of her sin, and that he was in some way involved in the death of her child. The "loft" where Elijah carried the body to pray over it, was an upper room dedicated to communion with God and meditation; the word in the Greek has this meaning attached to it, and no doubt it was the place of holy, sacred, and sweet communion, between the prophet and the High and Holy One. Like many a similar occurrence in our own time, there was mystery hanging round this afflictive dispensation. Here was a woman who loved God and entertained his prophets, bowed down in grief the deepest, saddest, earth can know. Elijah cannot understand it, and he seems to expostulate with God in his prayer.

"O Death all eloquent! you only prove
What dust we dote on when 'tis man we love."

"Oh! what a shadow o'er the heart is flung,
When peals the requiem of the loved and young."

God, in the miracle of restoring life to him who lay then in that "deep stillness, in that dreamless sleep," intended a greater display of his glory and more peculiar favor to this widow than the mere sparing of his life could have been. He was dead, but God heard Elijah's prayer, and then sank deep in this widowed heart the lesson that God was the author and giver, the hearer and answerer. How does this prayer encourage us to plead for all who are in sorrow! It is true we cannot work miracles, but we can implore the blessing of God on an affliction, so that the sorrowing heart may rejoice like this widow's.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings xvii.

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

The Lord's Answer.—1 Kings xvii.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

THE PRAYER OF ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL.

Elijah seems distressed at the wavering conduct of his people; sometimes they worship Jehovah and then again turn back to their idols or to Baal. He calls upon them to decide whom they will serve—if Baal be the true God, he exhorts them to worship him, but if not, he would implore them to worship the Creator of the world. The prophet's language is full of sarcasm, and even pours ridicule upon them, while they are going through ceremonies as absurd as they prove fruitless; and then he requests them to come with him, at the evening hour, to call upon the God *he* served. Before them stood the altar, and upon it the burnt offering prepared for the worship of Baal, the god to whom the people's prayers had been offered; but in the expressive language of Scripture, "There was no voice, or any that answered." In this prayer Elijah beseeches God to show to his people, that he was indeed the God of their fathers and their nation, and that all he had done, even in regard to the famine, was in direct obedience to the command of the Almighty.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Kings xviii.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day

that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

The Lord's Answer.—1 Kings xviii.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces : and they said, The LORD, he is the God ; the LORD, he is the God.

A PRAYER OF ELISHA FOR HIS SERVANT.

God had given most extraordinary powers to Elisha, both in working miracles and in curing the sick ; but whenever we see an exhibition of them, they are nearly always preceded by prayer. The servant for whom the prophet now prays had succeeded Gehazi, who by falsehood had secured the present which Naaman would have bestowed on Elisha, in remembrance of the wonderful cure he had performed upon him. In consequence of this sin Gehazi was seized with leprosy, and forfeited his place as servant to the prophet. Benhadad perhaps remembered the fire from heaven which had consumed the small companies which marched against

Elijah, and, as though there would be strength in numbers, he had marshaled a large army to apprehend Elisha. When the servant of the prophet saw the host which compassed the city—

“The troubled blood through his pale face was seen
To come and go, with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been.”

The prophet reminds him that God is on their side; with the eye of faith he sees the hosts of heaven gathered for his defence, and, strong in the might of God, he prays that the eyes of his servant may be opened to behold what was even now before his mortal vision.

“Fear not, I am with thee. O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my mighty, omnipotent hand.”

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Kings vi.

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee open his eyes, that he may see.

The Answer.

17 And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH.

Hezekiah had just received a letter from Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who, having invaded and laid waste much of the kingdom of Judah, was contemplating an attack on the capital. Hezekiah proposed to capitulate on certain terms, but was answered by a most insolent letter from Sennacherib. This haughty king had dared to raise his voice against the Most High, his heart was filled with pride and ambition, and he laughed to scorn the counsels of the God who could crush him as a moth. Hezekiah goes into the house of God to consult him by prayer in this matter. His mind is stayed on the Almighty, and his prayer is fervent and heartfelt. "Jehovah, the God of Israel who dwells between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, had been regarded by Sennacherib as the local deity of a small region, but Hezekiah implored the Lord to make himself known as the Creator of all things, the God of the heaven and the earth."

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Kings xix.

14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art

the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ;
thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear : open, LORD, thine eyes, and see : and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

18 And have cast their gods into the fire : for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them.

19 Now therefore, O LORD, our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

The Answer, by Isaiah.—2 Kings xix.

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH IN SICKNESS.

“How full of dread, how full of hope, loometh inevitable death,
Of dread, for all have sinned ;
The dread is drowned in joy, the hope is filled with immortality.”

Prostrate on a bed of languishing and pain lies Hezekiah, the man who had walked before God in uprightness of heart, and used his influence to promote his worship during many years of a useful life.

Death is hovering over his dwelling, and "sickness sits caverned in his hollow eye." And what are the thoughts of this good man in view of the approach of the "king of terrors." The son of Amoz had come with the message of the Lord, for him to "set his house in order," for his death was inevitable, to make without delay a full and final settlement of domestic and civil affairs, and prepare for that event which must come to all—

"The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave,
The deep, damp vault, the darkness, and the worm."

As if to shut out the world, Hezekiah turns his face to the wall of his chamber, and prays not for composure to meet the last great adversary—no! for the "king of terrors would be to him the prince of peace"—but he "wraps the drapery of his couch around him," and, in communion with the Almighty One, who holds in his hand the keys of life and death, prays for life. Hezekiah had lived "in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breaths, in feelings, not in figures on a dial;" and his reluctance to die must be ascribed to the state of his nation and family, for whose interests he had labored in the love and fear of God. It will be remembered at the time of Hezekiah's sickness he had no son; Manasseh was not born till three years after; by his death, therefore, this branch of David's family would have become extinct. He therefore desired

restoration to life and health, that he might work a little longer for the sake of true religion; and his prayer is to this effect. Tears flow freely with his words; each drop of sorrow is itself a prayer, and God gathers them into his treasury, as he asks for "the life of heart and life of soul mingled with life for the body."

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Kings xx.

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Kings xx.

4 And it came to pass, before Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

PRAYER OF JABEZ.

Nothing is recorded of the parentage or family of this man of prayer, except that he was eminent for wisdom, valor, and piety. His prayer is full of earnest faith, and like Jacob, he seems to wrestle, and will not depart without a blessing. He is led into war with the Canaanites, but conducts it not in his own strength, but in faith and prayer. In the land of Canaan believers under the Old Testament dispensation, saw a type of heaven, and in their wars the conflict of God's people with their spiritual enemies.

“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Chronicles iv.

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!

The Lord's Answer.—1 Chronicles iv.

10 And God granted him that which he requested.

THE UNITED PRAYER OF AN ARMY.

The army that was marshaled for action numbered four and forty thousand and seven hundred and three score. The conflict is with the Hagarites, or Ishmaelites—a nation of plunderers. The war was a just one and undertaken in the fear of God.

“Dream not of their fight as of a duel
Or the local wounds of head and heel.”

Oh no; the Lord of battles was on their side, and their united prayer, as it ascended to his high and holy throne, was heard and answered. The multitude that were taken prisoners by them, may convey an idea of the superiority of numbers among the enemy. A firm trust on the Almighty will always be expressed in humble, heartfelt prayer; anywhere and everywhere God will listen to his children when they cry; the remembrance that the “race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” should encourage us to be instant in season, and always in a prayerful spirit. There is something impressive and affecting in the united cry of these prayerful soldiers, each one of whom was engaging in a spiritual conflict, which nerved him for this battle with the Hagarites. God is with them, and victory is theirs.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Chronicles v.

18 The sons of Reuben and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skillful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, with Nephish, and Nodab.

20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in him.

PRAYER OF ASA.

Asa was son and successor of Abijam, on the throne of Judah, and employed the first part of his reign, which was peaceful, in the furtherance of religion and peaceful overthrowing of idolatry. At the time this prayer was made, Asa was characterized by exemplary piety, and his prayer was one of faith and dependence on God. Zerah, an Ethiopian king, came into his territories with "a host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots;" Asa met him with six hundred thousand, and defeated him; the Ethiopians were entirely overthrown and dispersed, and the spoil which had been deposited in Gerar, of the Philistines, and in other

cities of the vicinity was taken. Here the whole man, the whole army, is given over to the care and guardianship of God; there is a call for help, the confession that just such a protector is needed, as God would be in the fierce battle before Asa and his hosts. Experience has taught him that God has never yet failed to hear prayer, and the future is filled with hope drawn from the promises of a God of truth and mercy.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Chronicles xiv.

11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Chronicles xiv.

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

13 And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.

PRAYER OF JEHOSHAPHAT.

Jehoshaphat was a king of Judah and the successor of Asa. He was a man of distinguished piety, and enjoyed a long reign of twenty-five years. It is said of him, that the more his riches and honors increased, the more "his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord." During his reign the kingdom of Judah was invaded by the Moabites and others; and so great were their forces, that the king and people were thrown into consternation. It was a time to call upon the Lord, a time of danger and peril, and Jehoshaphat assembled the people at Jerusalem, proclaimed a fast, and made the following remarkable prayer, which was almost immediately answered by the promise of certain victory. "This was an instance of a fast observed in obedience to the proclamation of a chief magistrate, who acted with the power his station gave, and not by the spirit of prophecy." The Lord's answer came by a Levite descended from Asaph, and not by a high priest. The language of this prayer is full of humble and genuine faith. Jehoshaphat feels his own inability to combat against the powerful forces of the enemy, relies on God for help, appealing to him as to the justice of his cause. One expression of the prayer strikes us as remarkably expressive; it is—"Neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." How it tells of man's weakness and

God's strength, and in one short sentence expresses the feelings of every child of God. We would recommend especial attention to the reading of the chapter in which this prayer is recorded; it is full of interest, and is one of the most striking instances of prayer heard and answered that the Scripture contains.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Chronicles xx.

5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heaven? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Chronicles xx.

14 Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation ;

15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude ; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

16 To-morrow go ye down against them : behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz ; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle : set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem : fear not, nor be dismayed ; to-morrow go out against them : for the LORD will be with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground : and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH FOR THOSE WHO HAD EATEN
THE PASSOVER WITHOUT PURIFICATION.

It was the custom for the people to assemble at Jerusalem some days before the Passover, and prepare themselves, by removing all false altars and all abominations from the city.. Many of the ten tribes had come up at a very short notice and had no time for the customary preparation, and were therefore considered ceremonially unclean. Hezekiah prays

that God will pardon every omission, as their *hearts* are in the observance. To the prayer is granted a favorable answer, and they were allowed to eat the Passover when the Levites had killed it for them.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Chronicles xxx.

18 But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one

19 That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

The Lord's Answer.—2 Chronicles xxx.

20 And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

PRAYER OF MANASSEH WHEN IN AFFLICTION.

If we confine our attention strictly to the history of Manasseh as recorded in the book of Kings, we should infer that a career of wickedness had been followed out by him to the end of his long reign of fifty-five years; but in the second book of Chronicles we find a heart-broken, humble prayer from the lips of a man whose former life had been stained with every vice, for it is said of him, "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the abominations of the heathen." In the sixth verse of this chapter a sin of his is mentioned which caused the Lord to

be angry with him; and we speak of it here because it is one that is prevalent in our own days, and is leading many away from the simple faith of the Bible; to all such we would call attention to the repentance and prayer of Manasseh. When Manasseh and his people became violent in their opposition to God, he brought upon them the Assyrians, and gave them success in their invasions, permitting them to follow out their own worldly ambition, in order to chastize Manasseh, who was taken prisoner, loaded with fetters, and sent to Babylon.

“High walls and huge the body may confine,
And iron gates obstruct the prisoner’s gaze,
The massive bolts may baffle his design,
And vigilant keepers closely watch his ways;
Yet scorns the immortal mind this base control.
No chains can bind it, and no cells inclose;
Swifter than light it flies from pole to pole,
Or, in a prayer, from earth to heaven it goes!”

By the especial grace of God solitude and affliction brought reflection to Manasseh—

“Through the shadowy past,
Like a tomb-searcher Memory ran,
Lifting each shroud that time had cast.”

Every act of sin seems like a serpent’s sting, and is imbued with fresh bitterness; there is a burden weighing down his stricken heart. He betakes himself to prayer in his extremities, and the soul that

lay in darkness is lifted up to heaven; and at last, we trust, he found an entrance there. And this, my reader, is neither more nor less than "to be born again." There are those who love to hang around this "change of heart," a dark veil of mystery; heed it not, but read in this faith and repentant prayer the secret of your own salvation.

The Prayer as recorded.—2 Chronicles xxxiii.

12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

13 And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the *Lord* he was *God*.

PRAYER OF NEHEMIAH FOR THE CAPTIVE REMNANT OF JUDAH.

Nehemiah was a Jew of great piety, and occupied the station of cupbearer to Artaxerxes the king of Persia. The whole of this book is a record of his actions, of his zeal and disinterestedness for the advancement of the true religion. His station in the Persian court had prevented him from going to Jerusalem, but he expressed a godly concern about the condition of his brethren in Judea, and the temple of God. Jerusalem lay without walls or

gates of defence, and had done so since its devastation by the Chaldeans. Nehemiah, on hearing of the sad state of his brethren was troubled, and the impulse of his heart was to go over and help them, if he could only secure the patronage of the king. In this perplexity he remembers a God who reigns king over all, blessed forevermore, in whose hand are the hearts of even the highest of earthly rulers, and he calls upon him in prayer. No circumstances should ever render the Christian careless of the interests of the church of God; like Nehemiah he should be concerned for her welfare, and like him pray that God would build her walls and strengthen her borders. He should improve his talents and take advantage of every circumstance to add to her numbers, and even when far separated from her, his efforts for her prosperity, though in his own sight feeble, God may bless, and make eminently powerful in spreading the cause of truth in the world.

“Till, filled with light and joy and love,
Thy courts below, like those above,
Triumphant hallelujahs raise,
And heaven and earth resound thy praise.”

The Prayer as recorded.—Nehemiah i.

4 And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great

and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments :

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee : both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations :

9 But if ye turn unto me and keep my commandments, and do them ; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name : and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

The Lord's Answer.—Nehemiah ii.

1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, [or April,] in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him : and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick ? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchers, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come unto Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city and the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

PRAYERS OF NEHEMIAH WHILE BUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

Sanballat, the governor of the Samaritans, and other enemies of the Jews, endeavored by every means to overthrow the attempts of Nehemiah and his followers to rebuild the temple; they laughed him to scorn, and ridiculing the idea of his being

able to procure the necessary materials, with the most bitter sarcasm endeavored to dissuade him from the work. The Jews were at this time the church of God, and were employed in his worship, and for this they were hated by their enemies. They had need of much prayer in the midst of such violent opposition, and we find the petitions of Nehemiah recorded in the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of this book. To some readers the second recorded prayer may appear tinctured with conceit and a boasting spirit, but we would refer such to the language of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians; of whom he would take nothing, that he might stop the mouths of false apostles and covetous people.

The Prayers as recorded.—Nehemiah iv.

4 Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:

5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

Nehemiah v.

19 Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

Nehemiah vi.

9 O God, strengthen my hands.

The Lord's Answer.—Nehemiah vi.

15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, [August,] in fifty and two days.

16 And it came to pass that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Nehemiah vi.

15 Remember me, O my God, for good.

PRAYER OF JOB.

The book of Job has been regarded by some writers as a mere fiction or parable, but this notion has been refuted by eminent divines; and the opinion now entertained by most Bible readers, is that so ably presented by Dr. Kitto, who says: "We have the testimony of the sacred writers themselves to the reality of Job's person and history. We are told in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel that though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in such a place they should deliver but *their own souls* by their righteousness; from the context, and the manner in which this is introduced the characters here named seem to be taken as real; for first Job is joined with Noah and Daniel, who were certainly real characters; and these are spoken of as real and

living men. In the New Testament are allusions to the patience of Job and his character as one belonging to a real person. St. Paul and James both speak of him. We cannot suppose the Holy Spirit would make a reference to a feigned history for an example of faith and patience and its ultimate reward, if the person, the faith, and its recompense, were alike unreal." The prayers of Job must not then be regarded as fanciful pieces of composition, but as the "thanksgivings, complaints, and communings of one, human like ourselves," whose submission, faith, and patience, through the grace of God, acquired by prayer, made him triumphant over bodily weakness, over calamity, and the trials of a "vale of tears." He was an eminent saint of God, although we often see in reading his history an evident struggling of the human and mortal with the spiritual. The afflictions of Job were heavier and the circumstances more aggravated than usually fall to the lot of mankind; his cup was indeed full of deep and bitter sorrow, but it was the Lord who had mingled it; in the manner in which he drank it we see the strength of his faith and submission. One messenger after another had borne to Job the evil tidings of his swift and sudden trials, and when the last great sorrow, the loss of all his numerous family, is communicated to him, he is bowed to the earth with "the weight of the heavy heart in his bosom," and breaks forth in words that will live as

long as time and sorrow last, and while a God of love and justice reigns.

The Prayer as recorded.—Job i.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground, and worshiped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

PRAYER OF JOB AFTER HE HAD BEEN VISITED BY
HIS FRIENDS.

Job, as usual in cases of affliction, had many *so called* sympathizers; three are mentioned particularly as conversing with him and treating his sufferings and his character with contempt. In the daguerreotypes of Job's friends are features familiar to all the children of suffering and affliction; and there are few who are not painfully acquainted with Zophar, Eliphaz, and Bildad. In obedience to the command "to weep with those that weep," there are many, very many, of the good and kind who would and do change the sentence into *talking* with those that weep; not that words of sympathy and kindly advice should remain unuttered, but that they should be "words fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of silver," that they should be forcible

and right. We can imagine how, under his deep and heavy affliction, and after the conversation of his friends, Job was led to inquire so particularly into the cause of his trials, and we can almost excuse the passionate strain in which he speaks; he regards himself as a mark for the arrows of the Almighty; to use his own words: "Thou writest bitter things against me." He desires to clear away the clouds and darkness hanging round these trials, and know of God a reason for them. He says, in bitterness but in dependence, "My friends scorn me, but my eye poureth out tears unto God." He asks for the love of God in his heart, for fear seems to have taken possession of it. It is right for us to wait patiently God's time, and though in deep sorrow we see nothing but the frown of Providence, the knowledge that there is behind it a smile, will be sweet to our souls; and though heavy and severe be our trials, we may, by patience, be led with Job to exclaim: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

The Prayer as recorded.—Job xiii.

20 Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.

21 Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

25 Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

PRAYER OF JOB THAT GOD WOULD HIDE HIM FROM
HIS ANGER.

Job feels that death must soon release him from his suffering; he is willing to wait till the last great change shall come, but he prays that God will hide him till his displeasure pass away. In some verses of the prayer there is much of faith and hope, in others a feeling of deep despondency. "Job seems to have an affecting view of the miseries of human life, and pleads its brevity as a reason why man should be exempted from *constant* or extraordinary sufferings. Job believed dimly in a future existence, and in the immortality of the soul, but there is no evidence to show that either he or his friends had any distinct ideas of a place of future retribution. The difficulties with which Job labored, having, as he did, contracted views of the Divine plans, and under which the good labored before our

blessed Lord brought in a 'better hope'—these difficulties should teach us properly to appreciate the better conception of the spiritual world which the gospel has enabled us to realize."*

The Prayer as recorded.—Job xiv.

13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

16 For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to naught, and the rock is removed out of his place.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

21 His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

* Kitto.

PRAYER OF JOB THAT HE MIGHT FEEL GOD'S PRESENCE.

In perusing the history of Job no doubt many have felt that his sorrows were greater than he could possibly have deserved, and with Job himself they have inquired, "How many were his iniquities and sins that it was necessary for him to endure such a 'burden of trial?'" We must not lose sight of the fact that Job was a righteous man; he knew and felt that his afflictions were from the hand of God. How differently they were received from their Author by Job, than they are by men who have no love for that great Being in their hearts! All over the world we see the mourning of unbelievers unattended by religious benefit. God oftener tries and purifies the heart of the good man, by affliction, than he does that of the unbeliever. The good and the bad both mourn in tears, yet there is a sorrow that worketh repentance, and leads to prayer; and there is a sorrow of the world that worketh death. Overcome, but not cast down utterly, Job is willing to leave himself in the hands of God. He feels that his faith is being tried, and in his prayer seems to look forward to that glorious time when he shall come forth from all his trials purified and refined. Those of our friends who have felt what it is to have a conflict between faith and unbelief, hope and

despondency, a desire to be submissive, and the self-will opposing, enduring heavy trial and heavier temptations to sin, may easily account for the apparent changes in the character of Job; but his vehement desires and passionate protestations were quieted when he reflected that it was God's will he should be afflicted so bitterly, that it was the way appointed for him; and with these convictions he prays, assured that the judgment of God will be according to truth. It is thought, by the "judge" in this prayer, Eliphaz the Temanite is meant, for he had fearfully misjudged Job and brought in many accusations against him. In an hour of gloom, when he could get no fixed views of God's presence as his deliverer, Job prays.

The Prayer as recorded.—Job xxiii.

3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.

7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

11 My foot has held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

JOB'S PRAYER FOR AN ANSWER TO HIS PETITIONS.

That the prayers of Christians are not immediately answered ought never to discourage or dishearten, we must "pray on, pray ever," remembering the promise, that God will hear and answer in his own good time. The ways of the Almighty are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts like ours; his plans and purposes with regard to us are concealed, and the Christian should find it "sweet to lie passive in his hands, and know no will but God's." How-

ever dark the dispensations of Providence, however cold and bleak our path in life may have become, when the loved are buried and the idol taken, we should remember there is a source of comfort; it is earnest, heartfelt prayer; it is this which will lead us under the heaviest trial to say with the poet—

“Nearer, my God, nearer to thee,
E'en though it be a cross
That bringeth me,
Nearer my God, nearer to thee!
Then let my way appear
Steps unto heaven,
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given.
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!”

Job's distress was great that he could receive no answer to his prayers, and he therefore infers rashly that God is cruelly afflicting him. He forgot in his present terrible condition—for his body is wasted by disease, and sorrow deep and heavy is in his heart—that “God prepares the ear to hear;” he seems impatient for the Lord's answer. This spirit is reproved in that answer.

The Prayer as recorded.—Job xxx.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

The Lord's Answer to Job's Prayers.—Job xxxviii.

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb?

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

The Lord's Answer is continued through this chapter, and the Thirty-Ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first.

THE PRAYER OF JOB AFTER HE HAD RECEIVED THE
ANSWER.

Before the Lord vouchsafed an answer to Job, we perceive something of conceit and self-righteousness in his words, but all now is humble acquiescence. "Poor in spirit, meek in heart," Job acknowledges he has been rash in his language, and passionate and vehement in his desires. However wise in our own conceit, however great the stores of our knowledge attained in the schools of human learning, man is never allowed to call himself truly wise till he is lowly in heart, poor in spirit, and dead to the world;

"Simple, teachable, and mild,
Changed into a little child:
Pleased with all the Lord provides
Weaned from all the world besides;"—

till, in the language of Job in the following prayer, we can "abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes;" then afflictions, pains, temptations, waves, and storms may come, yet we will not be discouraged nor cast down, for our deliverance is near. His promises, and oath even, are engaged for our preservation, and

"Who shall pretend to teach him skill
Or guide the counsels of his will?
His wisdom, like a sea divine,
Flows deep and high beyond our line."

The Prayer as recorded.—Job xlii.

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said,

2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

7 And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.

10 And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought

upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keeren-happuch.

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

THE PRAYERS CONTAINED IN THE PSALMS.

As these prayers have been referred to in a former part of this work, and as it is not within the limit of the present volume, to comment upon or write each one of them out in order, we shall only allude to some of the more important among them, making, as it were, an index for the reader, which we trust will lead to an examination of the prayers as they are recorded in God's word. We find in the prayers contained in the book of Psalms the language of every heart awakened to a sense of its

obligations to God. Here is mourning for sin, thirsting after God and rejoicing in him; here is the language of the soul borne down by sorrow and grief, struggling against the temptation of a wicked world, and the "song of triumph" and hope of deliverance; indeed there is a prayer for every possible frame of feeling which can belong to any penitent under any circumstances. The Psalms have been called an epitome of the Bible adapted to the purposes of devotion. "They present religion to us in its most engaging dress, communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry could never equal, while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption."* They are called the "Psalms of David," as he was undoubtedly the writer of the greater part of them, and he was warranted in saying of them, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." In some of the prayers there is apparently a spirit of private resentment, and Scott, in remarking upon this says, these must be considered as direct prophecies or divinely inspired declarations of the certain doom awaiting all opposers of Christ and his cause and people. We mention this here, to disabuse the mind of an objection often offered against some of these petitions, and would

recommend a prayerful spirit with their careful perusal. The answers to many of them will be scattered throughout the Old as well as New Testament.

Prayer of David when he fled from Absalom.—Psalm iii.

1 Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

The Answer.—Psalm iii.

4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

Prayer of David in Sickness.—Psalm vi.

1 O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

The Answer.—Psalm xxix.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people.

Also Psalm vi.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.

A Prayer of David in the midst of the Wicked.—Psalm x.

1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

The Answer.—Psalm x.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.

Prayer of David that God will deliver him from his enemy.—Psalm xiii.

1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

The Answer.—Isaiah liv.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

Prayer of David for the Salvation of Israel.—Psalm xiv.

7 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!

The Answer.—John viii.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Prayer of David for God's Protection.—Psalm xvii.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

The Answer.—Psalm xci.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Prayer of David that he may be heard always.—Psalm xix.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

The Answer.—Psalm xxxvii.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Prayer of David for Protection.—Psalm xxv.

1 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God; I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

• *The Answer.*—Psalm xxv.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.

1 John iv.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Prayer of David that God will be his Judge.—Psalm xxvi.

1 Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity; I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

The Answer.—Psalm xxxii. (Also Romans xiv. 4.)

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Prayer of David to be taught of the Lord.—Psalm xxvii.

11 Teach me thy way O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

The Answer.—Psalm xxv.

8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Prayer of David to be led in the Way of the Lord.—Ps. xxxi.

3 For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

The Answer.—Jeremiah xxxi.

9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel.

Prayer of David in great Grief.—Psalm xxxi.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.

The Answer.—Psalm xxxii.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

Isaiah xl.

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Prayer of David that God would defend him in his Fight against his Enemies.—Psalm xxxv.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

The Answer.—Psalm xxxiv.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

Psalm xxxvi.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

Prayer of David for Light and Truth.—Psalm xliii.

3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

The Answer.—Proverbs iv.

18 The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Prayer in which David confesses original depravity.—Ps. li.

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

(This Prayer is continued through the Psalm.)

The Answer.—1 John i.

7 The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.

Jeremiah iii.

22 I will heal your backslidings.

Jeremiah xxxi.

3 I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

Prayer of David in Terror from his Enemies.—Psalm lv.

1 Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

The Answer.—John xvi.

33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Prayer of David that God will not forsake him in Old Age.—Psalm lxxi.

18 Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

19 Thy righteousness, also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

The Answer.—Isaiah xlvi.

3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.

Prayer of David that Affliction may be sanctified.—Ps. xc.

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

The Answer.—Psalm xciv.

12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.

David in the next prayer, is a type of Christ, and complains of the malice, deceit, and slander, of his enemies; he prays for relief, and praises God.

Psalm cix.

25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

27 That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it.

28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

Prayer for spiritual Life.—Psalm cxix.

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19 I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

The Answer.—John xii.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

John viii.

12 I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.

Prayer of David that he may be delivered from the deceitful.—Psalm cxx.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

There are two instances in the sacred record of David hiding in a cave, or concealing himself from his enemies; on one he is driven from the court of Achish, on the other from Saul, who was seeking him. It is supposed by commentators that this prayer was made on one of these occasions:

Prayer of David from the Cave of Adullam.—Psalm cxlii

1 I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

2 I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.

4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

PRAYER OF AGUR.

Among the writings of one who was full of sublime devotion as well as practical piety, the "extemporizer of the loftiest litany in existence," as he has been called—in the midst of his pungent proverbs, we find this prayer of Agur. It is placed in this brilliant setting, that the most careless may be attracted to it, and that the Bible student may read and examine the prayer of an humble follower of God. Agur was a teacher of Israel, and the names of his two pupils, Ithiel, (God with us,) and Ucal, (a mighty one,) lead us to suppose them both remarkable for learning and piety. It is not unreasonable to us to infer that he to whom they came for lessons in wisdom, should have excelled them, and was himself a man of eminent learning and piety. His prayer is full of that humility which marks the Christian, and is the offspring of true love to God. Agur seems to have been contemplating the works of the Creator, and we feel satisfied he had looked from Nature up to Nature's God; he feels his littleness and dependence, and from the depths of his heart pours out his prayers. His reflections have left in his soul two great desires, one regarding his temporal interests the other his spiritual, both involving the earnest wish to become a humble follower of God, by walking in the path the

righteous have chosen—one equally removed from the alluring vanities of life, and from the temptations incident to the path of extreme poverty. Agur asks not the “flagon of oil or the widow’s cruse,” neither does he canonize want into a Christian grace, or debase wealth to a bitter evil. We suppose him a man of observation; he had probably seen but few of God’s devoted followers among the very wealthy, and perhaps quite as few among the extremely poor—both situations bringing an attendant train of evils tending to lead the soul away from the path of life. In much wealth there is much danger, and though it may become a great blessing, it may be “kept by the owner, to his hurt,” and become a curse to wither the brain, and turn to ice a heart that once may have been the home of love and charity. Agur had seen a crown, “golden in show, yet but a wreath of thorns, bring trouble, care, and sleepless nights.” The desires in his prayer came from the heart, and were the result of his reflections; with his eye fixed on that safe resting spot midway on the road to fortune, and beyond which one loses the capacity for enjoyment, he asks a moderate amount of temporal good, so that in the gift he may not forget the Giver, and with Pharaoh ask, “Who is the Lord?” So on the other hand, he would be delivered from the anxieties, toils, and temptations incident to a state of extreme poverty, and chooses that middle path from

which he may the better lay up his treasures in heaven, and fix his affections there.

“Give me enough, saith Wisdom ;
For he feareth to ask for more ;
Give me enough, and not less,
For want is leagued with the tempter.”

We would have the reader ponder over this prayer, for in this gold-seeking, gold-loving age, it is seldom brought to the throne of grace. If God in his providence has given us wealth, may the petition of Agur warn us of danger, and may we become, by the blessing of him who has bestowed it, the honored instrument of relieving many who are in that state of poverty from which the teacher of Israel prayed to be delivered.

The Prayer as recorded.—Proverbs xxx.

1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy : the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended ? who hath gathered the wind in his fists ? who hath bound the waters in a garment ? who hath established all the ends of the earth ? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell ?

5 Every word of God is pure : he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

AN ALLEGORICAL PRAYER OF THE CHURCH.

We would call the attention of the believer to the prayer in the first of Solomon's Songs. We would have him remember it is the Holy Spirit speaking by the "wise man." It is full of that love which brought the Son of God to bleed and die for man, and of that love which he entertains for his chosen people, towards whom he manifests himself as he doth not unto the world. In the prayer the Church is represented as the spouse of Christ, desiring earnestly an evidence of God's love, and close fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. As we advance in the prayer the strain becomes still more ardent, and, as if not satisfied, the Church begs repeated expressions of God's favor; she would be led as a flock, be guarded from those who would lead her astray, and be continued steadfast in that love which was now more precious than wine. The force and beauty of this allegory can only be

appreciated by the truly spiritual—those who are the humble children of God, who have struggled and striven with sin, and whose hearts are the abode of the Holy Spirit.

The Prayer as recorded.—Solomon's Songs i.

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine.

3 Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

4 Draw me, we will run after thee : the king hath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we remember thy love more than wine : the upright love thee.

5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, the curtains of Solomon.

6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me : my mother's children were angry with me ; they made me the keeper of the vineyards ; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

7 Tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?

There is a continuation of the same prayer in the fourth chapter of Solomon's Songs, and the Church still keeps up her imploring song for God's love and favor:—

16 Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south : blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

ISAIAH'S THANKSGIVING.

We might almost call Isaiah's thanksgiving a song of praise; it is closely connected with the prophecy in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, and predicts that the converted nation of Israel, reflecting on their sufferings, the expression of God's anger for their rejection of the Messiah, will, when this wrath is taken from them, break out in the strains of the prophet. The deliverance of Israel was a shadow of the deliverance of the Church from the galling yoke of Satan. The effects of the Holy Spirit are often beautifully shadowed forth by the emblem of clear and springing water, purifying and fertilizing whatever it flows upon; so the Spirit, when he enters the heart, changes its vile nature, washes away its stains of guilt and sin. This figure alludes to a custom among the Jews. On the last day of their feast of tabernacles, water was brought from the fountain of Siloah, at the side of Mount Zion, and after being mixed with wine, was poured upon the sacrifice as it lay upon the altar. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come draw from the fountain of living water; come with faith and prayer, and our souls will be satisfied, and one and all make this the song of our thanksgiving, till we rest on the bank of that river which flows by the throne of the Eternal.

Isaiah's Song of Thanksgiving, as recorded.—Isaiah xii.

1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee : though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the LORD ; for he hath done excellent things : this is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout thou inhabitant of Zion : for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

ISAIAH'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S MERCY.

In his most lofty and poetic strains the prophet extols the Divine perfection, and praises God in prospect of the accomplishment of the prophecies he had just delivered. Isaiah had himself witnessed the fulfillment of many prophecies. Egypt in all her strength and beauty had been laid waste that Israel might be delivered ; the cities of Canaan had been destroyed that the Israelites might possess their inheritance ; Babylon the Great and Tyre, with their splendid palaces and glittering domes, would

be desolated, while Jerusalem the "holy city," would become a "palace of strangers." These and all other changes relating to the ruin of all anti-Christian opposers of the gospel, were the burden of the prophet's thought. God has always protected his Church, and guarded well her bulwarks; though at times her numbers have been small, the prophet has predicted that all nations shall be gathered unto her. By the term "strangers," is meant heathen, and, as St. Paul calls them, "aliens to the commonwealth of Israel." In the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, there is a prophecy of the sufferings of our Savior, and the glory which should follow, from the time of his coming on earth till the heavens shall be rolled away as a scroll and time be no longer. In the last verses there is an allusion to the joy of heaven, the home of the redeemed. How wonderfully in these latter days is God removing "the veil that is spread over all nations," as the prophet so poetically expresses it, and the banner of Jehovah has not only been raised in the islands of the sea, but God is fast fulfilling the predictions of this inspired prophet, and making to himself a "feast of fat things of wine on the lees well refined."

Isaiah's Acknowledgment, &c., as recorded.—Isaiah xxv.

1 O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city a heap; of a defenced city a

ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

ISAIAH'S TRUST IN GOD AND PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH.

Many and often were the prophet's prayers offered at the throne of the Eternal, the silent night watches and early morning hour found him engaged in this high communing, and it is no wonder his heart was the abode of that peace the world knows not of, or that the trust and confidence he expresses

should in so large a measure be enjoyed by him. The prayer following is full of that victory God gives to his people over their foes. The day spoken of in the first verse refers to that point in the future when the New Testament Babylon shall be destroyed; then shall the Church break forth with this prayer or thanksgiving. The ruin of Rome will prepare the way for the establishment of the church of God. "The foot of the poor and needy" God will make a powerful instrument in carrying out his mighty plans. The "righteous nation," instead of being confined to Judea will be finally extended to all the ends of the earth. In Israel, the very land of righteousness, were many hardened and impenitent; this seems to cause great grief in the prophet's heart, and he bewails bitterly their blindness.

Prayer of the Church as recorded.—Isaiah xxvi.

1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah ; We have a strong city ; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee : because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever : for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength :

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high ; the lofty city, he layeth it low ; he layeth it low, even to the ground ; he bringeth it even to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

7 The way of the just is uprightness; thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

13 O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

15 Thou hast increased the nation O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.

16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD.

18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR DELIVERANCE FROM HER ENEMIES.

In the first part of the chapter of which this prayer forms a part, are many assurances of help and protection; and the Church, encouraged by these, offers her petition. By the "arm of the Lord," is meant his power, and by "the ancient days," the former generations of Israel. As the Jews of old returned from Babylon to Zion with songs of joy, so that nation will be delivered and restored to the promised land. The Church reposes in confidence in God's promises; from every land the voice of prayer for her prosperity enters the ear of the Almighty. "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance; he found him in a desert land, he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." For the safety of his chosen people, and for their deliverance from oppression, God has overthrown nations and destroyed

kings. There is a light in every page of history to the spiritual vision of the child of God ; he reads in its records the annals of Infinite Wisdom and Mercy as blended and developed in the great work of human redemption. Let not the children of God faint and grow weary, for "the pillar of cloud and of fire," guards them as safely as it did of old ; "the vine brought out of Egypt" can never be uprooted, for the "Christian Church is the favorite child of an ever-watchful Providence."

The Prayer as recorded.—Isaiah li.

9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD ; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon ?

10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep ; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over ?

11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion ; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head : they shall obtain gladness and joy ; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

ISRAEL'S PRAYER IN RETURNING TO GOD, AND FOR
THE UNCONVERTED REMNANT OF THE PEOPLE.

In the following prayer the prophet has given us the words that penitent Israel shall use in returning to the Lord. The prayer is preceded by a thankful

commemoration of God's former mercies, and an earnest inquiring whether they are forgotten by the Most High; though all should disown them, yet they earnestly beseech him to remember them, acknowledging humbly there is help in no other. There is a beautiful allusion to the frailty of human hopes, represented by the figure of the fading leaf, so also an expression of the willingness of God's chosen people to be entirely *submissive*, even as the clay in the hands of the potter. The "beautiful house" alluded to was the temple of Jerusalem, now desolated. But this prayer of Israel will be heard; she hath not been cast off forever, nor is she to be always trodden down by the Gentiles. In the beautiful imagery of this prophet, a voice will say to the oppressed and fallen ones, "Arise shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee." We know not the precise instrumentality God will employ to call these wanderers from every island and shore on which they are scattered, but we believe that the north shall give up and the south keep not back, and the sons and daughters of Israel shall be gathered from far, for the voice of the Almighty has spoken it. God will hear the prayer of penitent Israel, and of his chosen children, for her welfare and restoration. The religion of Jesus, so long despised, will yet become theirs, and every hill-top and valley of Judea shall echo the song, "Glory to God in the highest;

peace on earth and good will to men." We are taught by the prophet in this prayer to put no trust whatever in our own merits, that our supplications must be earnest, that God may be approached as a Father, and that all who come in this way will prevail; and though God chooses his own time, and his people are sorely afflicted, yet all who trust in his mercy shall be accepted, and inherit, in the language of this prayer, the joy that no eye but God hath seen.

The Prayer as recorded.—Isaiah lxiii & lxiv.

15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

17 O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18 The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

19 We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

Isaiah lxiv.

1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.

2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters

to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

10 Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace and afflict us very sore?

The Lord's Answer.—Isaiah lxx & lxxi.

1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by name.

2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

11 But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble;

for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Isaiah lxvi.

1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

3 He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children.

9 Shalt I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God?

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come

that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, said the LORD.

24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

PRAYER OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

Jeremiah was one of the chief of the Hebrew prophets, the son of Hilkiah, and of the sacerdotal race. When he was called to prophecy by the Lord,

Jerusalem was in a distressed condition, and being very young, he seems afraid to undertake the great work before him—a feeling clearly expressed by his prayer. But he was the “chosen of the Lord,” and through the long period of forty-two years, was a faithful and devoted servant—in the midst of severe persecution faithful in prayer and in denouncing God’s judgments upon his guilty nation and the devoted city of Jerusalem. It is the opinion of many Bible students that he finally died a martyr to the cause to which his life had been devoted.

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah i.

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

The Lord’s Answer.—Jeremiah i.

7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

A VOICE OF WEeping AND SUPPLICATION FROM
ISRAEL.

The prophet in most touching and tender strains, represents Israel as weeping over their sad condition, confessing that they are suffering the consequences of gross sin and departure from God, acknowledging that from their youth up they have disobeyed the voice of the Almighty. In carefully reflecting on the beautiful language of the prophet, we find it teaching a lesson of deep significance to every heart. We cannot be truly penitent without being conscious of our depravity, and of the iniquity of even our most holy things, and while God invites us to come to his mercy-seat with all this guilt upon us, and thus glorifies the abundance of his own grace, he requires the knowledge and humble confession of our sin. In this frame of mind the greatest transgressor has nothing to fear. God offers everything to the penitent and nothing to the presumptuous. There are tears mingled in this petition; for the prophet tells us it was a "voice of weeping and supplication."

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah iii.

21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your back

slidings. Behold, we come unto thee ; for thou art the LORD our God.

23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains : truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

24 For shame hath devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth ; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.

25 We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us : for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

The Lord's Answer.—Jeremiah iv.

1 If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me : and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.

2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness ; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

JEREMIAH PRAYETH AND TEACHETH HIS PEOPLE
HOW TO VIEW CALAMITY.

Rebellious under trial, and disinclined, the people are invited by the prophet to God's throne in prayer, to the only source of strength and power. They had indeed great need of support, for grievous were their present troubles. The haughty Nebuchadnezzar hearing of Zedekiah's rebellion, came with all

his power against Jerusalem, and his forces were too strong to be resisted. The Egyptians on whom the Jews had relied for help failed to assist them; the Chaldeans were marching directly to Judea; this explains the phrase, "the noise of the bruit." The prophet prays that God would remember them in love. The phrase "They have eaten up Jacob," refers to the idolatrous nations who had oppressed Jacob his people.

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah x.

23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

24 O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

JEREMIAH, PERPLEXED ON ACCOUNT OF CONSPIRACY,
PRAYS.

The prophet's heart is troubled on account of the prosperity of the wicked about him, and the success of their conspiracies. Anathoth was a city of the tribe of Benjamin, near Jerusalem, and it was from the men of this place the prophet feared much, and in his own judgment supposed if the Lord would

but pour out his fury on *them*, the ruin of his nation might be prevented. This is the theme of the prophet's prayer. He knows the Lord is righteous in all his dealings, but he would "talk with the Lord," to use his own language, "of his judgments." He exercises a degree of impatience which in the Lord's answer is gently reproved. We are taught by this prayer that God's ways are not our ways, and that although his dealings with us are often mysterious, He, the All-wise, is making our path for us; guiding every event for our good, and will eventually deliver us from all trials.

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah xii.

1 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?

2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

The Lord's Answer.—Jeremiah xii.

5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in

the land of peace wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

JEREMIAH INTERCEDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN TIME OF FAMINE.

The land of Judah was mourning, her hills and valleys were parched, and her people suffering from the effects of famine. The highest in the land as well as the poorest were alike panting for water, and the children of the nobles returned from the dry fountains with their pitchers empty. The animal creation too joined in the universal cry of distress and sorrow, and a wail was heard through all the land; the prophet pleads with God with more zeal than knowledge, as the Lord's answer leads us to infer; he would have him show to the Gentiles he was ready to save, that the honor of his name—his goodness—laid him, as it were, under obligations to succor his people. But the Lord says, in reply to the prophet, he will punish them for their sins, as they do not forsake them through love or fear to him; the prayer is not accepted. Here again is the Christian reader taught a useful lesson, that he must forsake his sins and love God, would

he have his prayers answered; if there is secret sin cherished, in vain will he call upon Him. Such petitions are an "abomination."

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah xiv.

7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.

8 O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a way-faring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?

9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.

The Lord's Answer.—Jeremiah xiv.

10 Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins.

11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

12 When they fast I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine and by the pestilence.

As if convinced the Lord was right and just in thus dealing with them, the prophet seems at a loss to know what to plead further for his people; he remembers that false prophets have given them repeated assurances of the favor of God; but the prophet is met here by the answer of the Lord, in denouncing these prophets as false.

13 Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.

The Lord's Answer.

14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophecy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophecy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart.

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophecy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

16 And the people to whom they prophecy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

17 Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

The Prophet still pleads earnestly for his people.

Hath the Lord cast off Judah? By this he means the visible church in which the promised Messiah should be raised up. The temple in which he manifested his especial presence above the mercy-seat, was the "throne of his glory," would it not be disgraced if heathen were allowed to enter and profane it?

Jeremiah xiv.

19 Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good: and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!

20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.

21 Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us.

22 Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.

The Lord's Answer.—Jeremiah xv.

1 Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

2 And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.

3 And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.

4 And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

5 For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?

6 Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah, not yet satisfied with the Lord's Answer, still pleads.

Jeremiah felt as many a child of God has felt, and there are but few who cannot sympathize with the prophet as he continues to plead. We think, with the aid about us, we may look into his mind for a moment as he pours out his prayer, and see him reasoning with himself, and wondering, no doubt, at the Lord's answers to him. He feels himself hated, despised, and rejected by the world—the fearful lot of many of God's chosen, and he cannot yet understand why all these afflictions may not be removed; he seems to review his own life, to examine his own heart as he prays to the Almighty; he is not conscious of holding back the truth, but he knows he has proclaimed the whole counsel of God. Is it for any sin he has committed? In deep grief the prophet pours out his petition and reminds God of his promises.

The Prayer continued, as recorded.—Jeremiah xv.

15 O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?

The Lord's Answer.

19 Therefore, thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Jeremiah still prays.

He pleads for calmness of mind, for peace and composure, and to be saved from the power of his enemies, who continued to treat his predictions with contempt. The prophet spake as moved by God, or rather God spake by the prophet, and those who forsook him forsook the Lord. Would not the memory of such be soon blotted out or become infamous—their names be “written in the earth,” as the prophet expresses it in this prayer? He reminds the Lord he would not have chosen the path that he had appointed him to walk in, neither had he desired this “woful day.” There is much confusion in his mind on account of his great troubles, and some apprehension of God’s displeasure towards him.

Jeremiah xvii.

13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

15 Behold, they say unto me, where is the word of the LORD? let it come now.

16 As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee.

17 Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.

18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

The Lord's Answer.

19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

20 And say unto them hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:

21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;

22 Neither carry forth the burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein ;

25 Then shall there enter into this city the gates of the kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and this city shall remain for ever.

26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.

27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day ; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

A VOICE OF WEeping AND SUPPLICATION FROM
RACHEL.

Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, and a large proportion of her descendants now inhabited Israel ; the prophet in a figure represents her as rising from her grave, which was in Ramah, or between it and Bethlehem, and weeping over the desolation made among her descendants. The Lord in his answer promises that those who are scattered

shall finally return, and that her labor in rearing them shall eventually be rewarded.

Rachel's Supplication, as recorded.—Jeremiah xxxi.

15 A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

The Lord's Answer.

16 Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

THE BEMOANINGS OF EPHRAIM.

Ephraim represents here the ten tribes of Israel. Rebellious under God's chastisements they had been impatient and unsubmitive, but convinced of the depth of their guilt, astonished at their great ingratitude, and deeply penitent like the prodigal son, they are represented as coming to themselves, or to a knowledge of their position, as one of danger, and seeking God as their portion. In his answer the Lord assures them he has followed them in all their wanderings, waiting to be gracious, and now that they are sensible of their sin and God's justice, they

shall surely find mercy. Let the unconverted man, as he reads the bemoanings of Ephraim, draw from them the great lesson God has written here for the salvation of his soul.

The Bemoanings of Ephraim as recorded.—Jeremiah xxxi.

18 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus : Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke : turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the LORD my God.

19 Surely after that I was turned, I repented ; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh : I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

The Lord's Answer.

20 Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still ; therefore my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

THE PRAYER OF JEREMIAH IN PRISON.

The prophet had been confined in the court of the prison, that he might not deliver his predictions. Zedekiah and his princes were determined to silence this man of God, and to hold out to the very last extremity against the superior power of the Chaldeans. In prison the prophet could still pray ; no circumstance could shut him away from this privi-

lege; thus far had he been faithful to his high commission.

“Servant of God, well done ! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who singly hast maintained
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms ;
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence ; for this was all thy care,
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse.”

The Lord made known to the prophet that Hana-meel would come to sell him a field which he must buy. All the land was now already in the hands of the Chaldeans, and during the famine the field was offered for the small price of about forty shillings; the prophet found it inconvenient to part even with so small a sum, and could not possibly in his own judgment, at present, reap much advantage from the purchase. The Lord was explicit in directions with regard to the deeds, and ordered them preserved in such a manner that they would not be liable to decay or loss. The prophet in his prayer seems perplexed; he cannot understand why the command should clash with the predictions he had been sent to deliver, and he seems to inquire of the Lord respecting the matter in this prayer. “The mounts” signifies anything that is cast up—a rampart—and is also used for engines of war laid on a high place to be ready for an attack on a city.

The prophet seems to mourn deeply, for he had, no doubt, a secret hope that the "city" would be spared. Why had the Lord been so particular about the purchase of this field, so exact about the witnesses and deeds, if the land was to be inhabited by his enemies.

The Prayer as recorded.—Jeremiah xxxii.

16 Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying,

17 Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee :

18 Thou showest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them : the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name.

19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work : for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men : to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings :

20 Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men ; and hast made thee a name, as at this day ;

21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror :

22 And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey ;

23 And they came in and possessed it ; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law ; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do : therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them :

24 Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it.

25 And thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into hand of the Chaldeans.

The Lord's Answer.—Jeremiah xxxii.

26 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

28 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:

29 And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.

31 For this city has been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face,

32 Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

33 And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

34 But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it.

35 And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

36 And now therefore, thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say it shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.

42 For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

43 And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

44 Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in

the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south : for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

The Lord's Second Answer to Jeremiah, in Prison.

Jeremiah xxxiii.

1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it ; the LORD is his name ;

3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

4 For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword ;

5 They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.

6 Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

7 And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.

8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

9 And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them : and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

10 Thus saith the LORD ; again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,

11 The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts ; for the LORD is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever : and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

12 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.

13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the LORD.

14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.

15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David ; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely : and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

17 For thus saith the LORD ; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel ;

18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before

me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,

20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;

21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;

26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

LAMENT OF JEREMIAH.

After Israel was carried captive and Jerusalem desolated, the prophet mourned, or as has been said, "bewailed this wailing." The whole of this book

of Lamentations might be called a poem, for it is not only highly poetical in its language, but there is much order as well as rythm in it. There are twenty-two stanzas in each chapter; each verse in the first two begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in regular order. The affliction, the desolation and distress, surrounding the prophet, are represented by such images and language as convey to us the magnitude and religious importance of the great calamities he weeps over. The Jews have called this book of the prophet, "Kinnoth," or *tears*. In the annexed prayer Jerusalem, or Zion, is represented as a sorrowful female bereft of her children, deserted, "sitting solitary,"—adversaries surrounding her—but in the midst of trouble acknowledging God is just; her sense of guilt is intolerable to her; from friends she finds no relief, her appeal is then made to God, who alone can help, and who will deal with his enemies and friends according to his eternal justice. This prayer is peculiarly applicable to the case of every convinced sinner. In this cold world there is little of comfort. Sin, the "fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into our world and all our wo," has taken deep root in the human heart, has marred the glory and beauty of our moral nature. Tears, floods of tears, should be shed by us, as with the "sorrowing female" of the prophet we weep over the desolation that vice has spread around us. But there is a

mercy-seat, an ear open to hear our "complaint," and to it we may have access, if we but acknowledge with the prophet we have grievously rebelled; if we find the earth "a vale of tears," we may call upon a God of love.

To the mourner he is pointing
To a home of light above,
Where sorrow is forgotten
And all is joy and love.
His ready hand will wipe away
Your penitential tears,
Will heal your wounded broken heart,
And banish all your fears.

Lament of Jeremiah as recorded.—Lamentations i.

18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.

19 I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.

20 Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.

21 They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.

22 Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

JEREMIAH ACKNOWLEDGES THE LORD AS HIS
PORTION.

The prophet in this prayer shows us the benefit of affliction, and in the chapter in which it is contained seems to consider his own personal sorrow, and sympathizes deeply with others under similar circumstances with himself. We are expressly told by the prophet not only to lift our hands but our hearts to God; not to come in formality, but after searching our ways, to acknowledge our sin, and that God, who doeth right in afflicting the children of men, will hear such prayer. In the words of the hymn suggested by the prayer of the prophet, we shall find it

“Sweet to look inward and attend
The whispers of his love;
Sweet to look upward to the place
Where Jesus pleads above.

“Sweet in the confidence of faith
To trust his firm decrees,
Sweet to lie passive in his hand,
And know no will but his.”

Jeremiah's Acknowledgment, &c., as recorded.—Lam. iii.

24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.

29 He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.

30 He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

41 Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

42 We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.

43 Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.

44 Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.

45 Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.

46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

47 Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.

48 Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,

50 Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.

51 Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.

52 Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.

53 They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.

54 Waters flowed over mine head ; then I said, I am cut off.

55 I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon.

56 Thou hast heard my voice : hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry.

57 Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee thou saidst, Fear not.

58 O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul ; thou hast redeemed my life.

59 O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong : judge thou my cause.

60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.

61 Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, and all their imaginations against me ;

62 The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day.

63 Behold their sitting down, and their rising up ; I am their music.

64 Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.

65 Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.

66 Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.

THE INTERCESSION OF EZEKIEL.

This prophet seems to have been raised up by God especially, by his predictions and prayers to animate and encourage the pious remnant of his people. There is something in his vehement energetic style, which strikes us with awe and astonishment ; we feel it is no common man who prays, but a servant chosen of God, and bearing a high and

sacred commission. The language of many parts of the book of Ezekiel is very figurative. The scope of his predictions was very similar to Jeremiah's. His writings contain several visions representing the calamities of the Jews, reproofs of their wickedness, God's anger as well his mercy. In the verses in immediate connection with the prophet's address to God the Lord is represented as leaving his "mercy-seat" to denounce judgment on the people, to withdraw from his temple at Jerusalem, and give them to the power of their enemies. He then gives an order to "the man clothed with linen"—the second person of the trinity, to set a mark on the forehead of all, that sighed continually, or that protested against sin. This alludes to a custom among eastern nations, whose servants were marked in their foreheads. These the Lord tells the executioners of his vengeance not to spare, but slay without mercy all others. The prophet seeing the great destruction about him intercedes for his people. Left alone as it were in the court of the temple; the ten tribes had been entirely destroyed or dispersed, a very small remnant of Judah remained, and the prophet's heart seems full of fear lest not one should be left.

The Intercession of Ezekiel as recorded.—Ezekiel ix.

8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

The Lord's Answer.—Ezekiel ix.

9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

The further Intercession of Ezekiel.—Ezekiel xi.

While the prophet was delivering the message of the Lord to the princes, one of them was cut off at Jerusalem very suddenly by death. The prophet seems to be alarmed.

Ezekiel xi.

13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Peletiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

The Lord's Answer.—Ezekiel xi.

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even

gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

EZEKIEL COMPLAINS THAT THE PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

As God had chosen this prophet to become the vehicle of the most extraordinary series of prophecies concerning his people, he also teaches him to employ figures to illustrate his meaning. Some of which are very peculiar, and to the careless reader no doubt as incomprehensible as they were to some of those to whom the prophet spoke. It will be well here to enumerate some of the most striking figures used by the prophet; although not immediately connected with this prayer, they may serve to give us a just appreciation of the prophet's meaning. He speaks of a "wheel," or a sphere made of a wheel in the middle of a wheel; this vision was

emblematic of Providence. Of a "cloud" out of which are the likenesses of four living creatures, with attributes denoting wisdom, strength, swiftness, and obedience, they move "straight forward;" these are the ministers of Providence, turning not to the right or left, directed by one mind, for whither "the spirit went they went;" the "wheel" had four faces looking every way, moving every way, and connected with the living creatures—"full of eyes," representing the omniscient and omnipresent God. The "height of the wheels was dreadful." "Such is God's providence—a scheme for carrying out purposes high as heaven, and lasting as eternity. God is the soul of providence."* In the Lord's answer to this prayer the prophet is told to make his language plainer, and drop these figures, which word we shall see the prophet obeys.

Ezekiel's Complaint, &c., as recorded.—Ezekiel xx.

49 Then said I, Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

The Lord's Answer.—Ezekiel xxi.

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophecy against the land of Israel,

3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of

his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north :

5 That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath : it shall not return any more.

6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins ; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou ? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings ; because it cometh : and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water : behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord God.

THE PRAYER OF DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS THAT THE LORD WOULD INTERPRET NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had taken away Daniel and his friends, and in the second year of his reign had the remarkable dream, the subject of Daniel's prayer. The king's heart was troubled, for "a vision of the night had left a weight upon his waking thoughts;" it was from the Lord, and so ordered as to bring Daniel into notice—to make known his glory as Israel's God, and the God of the whole earth. This vision consisted of a description of four monarchies which would continue to the end

of the world, and one of them till the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of "his son," whose right it is to reign in the armies of heaven and among the children of men. Man's feeble knowledge could not satisfy the king, the magician's art had failed, and the monarch's heart was restless—his harsh decree is issued. There is a never failing source of knowledge, Daniel has often been at the mercy-seat; and though, O man! in thy own strength frail and erring, in prayer—

"Thy momentary breath can still the raging waters,
Thy hand can touch a lever that may move the world;
O Merciful, we strike eternal covenant with thee."

For man may take for his ally the "King who ruleth kings." Daniel seeks his companions to call with them upon the Almighty. Can we not imagine this prayer-meeting? Are not two or three met here for the purpose of communing with their Maker? Here we have high authority for persevering in the practice of meeting for social prayer. God has promised to be in the midst of the little company, to reveal to his children knowledge the world knows not of. Daniel, high in power in Nebuchadnezzar's court, surrounded by all the temptations that wealth and royalty could give, was humble-minded and spiritual, prayerful and devoted to the end of life.

The Prayer as recorded.—Daniel ii.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions :

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret ; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

The Lord's Answer.—Daniel ii.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel returns Thanks.—Daniel ii.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever : for wisdom and might are his :

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons : he removeth kings, and setteth up kings : he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding :

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things : he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee : for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

NEBUCHADEZZAR CONVICTED BLESSES GOD.

In the prayers of this monarch we have a striking instance of the difference of conviction and conversion. In this petition we see the king's heart touched with the power of truth. He had beheld the firm faith, "that vital principle," making his servants, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, calm under the most trying circumstances, serving a God of power and might, who had delivered them unharmed from the devouring flame. Captives, and far from the land of God and his ordinances, in the hands of a proud monarch, these three children of God had dared to be "singular;" they obeyed the Lord of heaven and earth rather than man, they felt not their bonds, their spirits knew no yoke, and fearless they stood before the king.

"He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

They felt this, and "strong in trust, endured the fire." Terrified as well as astonished at the miracle he witnessed, the king is convinced there is a power stronger than his own, a will mightier than man's, and for a time retains these impressions. His prayer is impulsive; there is no humbling of that proud heart, no change in it; there is an acknowledgment of God's power, but there is yet no passing from

death unto life—no confession of sin. God has trials sore and deep before that proud will becomes subdued.

Nebuchadnezzar's Prayer.—Daniel iii.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

THE THANKSGIVING OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

One short year has rolled away, and with its hurried flight had borne the convictions of the monarch's heart. We behold him as he paces his lofty terrace overlooking the splendid city, and we hear from Holy Writ his musings as he contemplates the splendor and magnificence around him: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?"—these palaces with all their beauty, are they not mine? How great is my power! and am I not a king? In the few fleeting months that have passed he has forgotten the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,

“the Lord of lords and King of kings.” Self is exalted, self is the object of his homage. Daniel has been to him a faithful friend, but the wise counsels of “the prophet of God” have been disregarded by the king. God had listened to Daniel’s prayers, had met him at the mercy-seat, and in his own way would yet humble the proud heart of Nebuchadnezzar. Deep and bitter were his trials, but they brought him to his God. They gave him a knowledge that opened his eyes to see his own strength weakness; his pride was humbled, and a spirit of deep humility pervades his thanksgiving.

Daniel’s Thanksgiving.—Daniel iv.

29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?

31 While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee.

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up

mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation :

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing : and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me ; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me ; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me ; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment ; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

THE PRAYER OF DANIEL FOR THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM.

It is said of Daniel that three times a day he entered his closet to commune with God ; though surrounded with cares and anxieties, as chief president of the kingdom, he sought relief from them all where only relief could come, he sought that wisdom which stamped his career as a man of God and a ruler. In the chapter preceding this particular prayer, we are told of these stated devotions, and also that upon his knees, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he sought God's favor. With

every token of sorrow, humiliation, and love, Daniel has come to pray at this time for God's promised mercy to his afflicted people. There is deep confession of his own sin and the sin of his people, that the punishment is justly deserved, but that even the most guilty might hope in God; he alludes to the fact, that many, very many of the Jews had failed to call upon the Most High, or sought to be turned from their iniquities, but his desire that God would restore his temple, and cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary, was earnest and heartfelt. While he pleads with God his prayer is answered, for we are told that a "holy visitant," one sent from God, but in the form of a man, comes to instruct Daniel concerning the Lord's designs, with regard to the subject of his prayer. He has repeated assurances of the Lord's favor and is called by the angel the "beloved." In the angel's answer to Daniel we have one of the most striking and undeniable prophecies of the coming and salvation of Christ which is contained in the Old Testament; this is one of the reasons why the Jews refused to recognize Daniel as a true prophet—the "seventy weeks" are four hundred and ninety years; and to this day the rabbinical teachers withhold it from their people.

The Prayer as recorded.—Daniel ix.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confes-

sion, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our

God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

The Answer.—Daniel ix.

20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being

caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

THE PROPHET JOEL'S PRAYER IN TIME OF FAMINE.

In most beautiful and pathetic strains this prophet represents all nature joining in a universal lament, even the beast of the field, the "lowing herd," and grazing sheep in the valleys, are dying and falling thickly around for want of sustenance. Verily it is a time to call upon him who bringeth summer and winter, seed time and harvest, in his own good time, and the prophet calls upon high and low, the rich and poor, to unite with him in prayer to the Almighty, for in his own poetic language, "The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree, also are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men." He also calls upon the ministers who kept the watches at the temple, to gather their people together on this distressing occasion, to unite in his cry to God, to let it be loud and universal from saint and sinner, to lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth, a striking figure of the deepest sorrow of earth.

The Prayer as recorded.—Joel i.

19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

The Lord's Answer.—Joel ii.

12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

PRAYERS OF AMOS THAT GOD WOULD AVERT THE
JUDGMENTS OF THE FIRE AND GRASSHOPPERS.

Amos was a simple herdsman; his words "I am no prophet or son of a prophet," seem to distinguish him from those who were educated in the schools of Samuel. The Lord had shown him in a vision the judgments he would bring upon Israel. His first prayer relates to the grasshoppers which should consume the beauty and verdure of the land, and the next to a desolating fire. Both of these petitions are heard and answered. They encourage us to regard and mention in our own prayers the evils about us. God's arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and though our own petitions may seem but a feeble instrument in removing great calamity, yet we know that "prayer is the slender nerve that moveth the muscles of Omnipotence," and it is grounded on the promise of the Eternal Jehovah."

The Prayers of Amos as recorded.—Amos vii.

2 And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee : by whom shall Jacob arise ? for he is small.

The Lord's Answer.—Amos vii.

3 The LORD repented for this : It shall not be, saith the LORD.

Second Prayer of Amos.

4 Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me : and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.

5 Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee : by whom shall Jacob arise ? for he is small.

The Answer.

6 The LORD repented for this : This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

PRAYER OF THE MARINERS IN THE STORM.

The whole of the narrative of the ancient prophet Jonah is full of interest, and suggestive of salutary reflection ; the prayers are peculiarly so. In his character of a prophet he had received directions

from God to go to Nineveh, a city full of idolatry and wickedness, to announce its ruin. Jonah, fearful of rebuke and insult, and, perhaps, of death, resolved to disobey the command of God, and embarked in a ship bound for Tarshish. But there was an eye that "never slumbers or sleeps," and that eye saw his transgression. He "that bringeth the wind out of his treasures," that holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand, is Lord of the elements, and caused them to do his pleasure. The sky, so serene when the prophet embarked, is suddenly overcast, and the storm rages about the frail vessel "like a giant in his fury." The crew of this bark were idolators, each man apparently having a different deity, for it is said in a former verse, "The mariners were afraid and cried every man unto his god. They had probably been idolators from childhood, and in this moment of peril, each called upon the being he had been taught to worship. Their case is desperate, and they seek Jonah, who, like too many inactive Christians, lay quietly sleeping. From the shipmaster he receives a rebuke for his apathy in this time of danger, and it must have been most cutting and severe to a servant of Jehovah, that an idolator should rouse and urge him to duty. Jonah, conscious of his guilt, and aware that the storm is the wrath of an angry God, confesses his nation, his profession, and his sin. In vain do the hardy crew, overcome no doubt by Jonah's

words, use every exertion to reach the shore. It is at this moment that the mariners' prayer ascends to the God of Jonah. While the waves are beating and dashing angrily around them, they cast the prophet, according to his own request, into the sea, and the waves are calm, the waters cease their raging. The mariners perceiving the power of the Almighty, cast aside their gods, and worship the God of heaven and earth.

The Mariners' Prayer as recorded.—Jonah i.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

The Answer.—Jonah i.

15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

THE PRAYER OF JONAH FROM THE MIDST OF THE
SEA.

We must not regard, as some have done, the present position of Jonah in a figurative sense, for we have full proof of its reality in the words of our blessed Lord himself, who repeatedly speaks of it in terms too plain to be mistaken by us. God, in judgment for disobedience, had mercy upon him, and even from the belly of the fish heard and answered his prayer. The prophet was placed in a position where he felt his sin, and this led him to prayer; but where is the solitude that God cannot fill? and where is the spot on earth or in the seas where his eye does not rest, and from which the voice of prayer may not ascend? In this remarkable event in the life of the prophet Jonah, we may see a type of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. His prayer is earnest, and the state of his mind rendered his position, as he says, like the "belly of hell," or like the state of the wicked in death, from whose torment there is no escape. So it seemed, no doubt, to the prophet, there was no ray of light, except as the love of God in his heart lit up his prison-house, and from that dark abode of the praying prophet,

"Pure thoughts were borne,
Like fumes of sacred incense o'er the clouds,
And wafted thence on angels' wings through ways
Of light to the bright Source of all."

The Prayer as recorded.—Jonah ii.

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

The Lord's Answer.—Jonah ii.

10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

JONAH PRAYS THAT GOD WILL TAKE HIS LIFE.

We should expect to find the prophet after such a merciful preservation humble and submissive, but such was not the case. In obedience to the will of God, after his deliverance from the deep, Jonah went to the city of Nineveh; the burden of his prophecy to them was their utter destruction, unless they repented and turned to the Lord. But the ears of the Ninevites were opened, and they listened eagerly to the prophet's words. The fame of the works God had wrought amongst the Jews had reached them, and they heard Jonah with eagerness, for we are told that from the king to his lowest subject there was fasting and prayer to God, and "turning from every evil way." Ought not the success of his mission to inspire Jonah with joy and gratitude? Instead of this his heart is ruffled, and he is angry at his success. It will be remembered that the Israelites held an unfounded prejudice toward the Gentiles, and the prophet no doubt, in his own mind, encouraged this feeling; he might also, in the language of another, "have had a mistaken zeal for the honor of God, and feared that as he was sent to predict destruction, it might cast an imputation on the cause in which he was engaged." We find him angry and rebellious, and calling upon

God in this frame of mind. He seems to hasten away from the city lest he should witness the turning of the people, and retiring to a booth or tent he had raised, waited there till he should see what became eventually of the city. The winds in those hot countries are often very suffocating, as they sweep over the deserts, and come laden with its sand and heat, and this, with the fretted, impatient spirit the prophet had nourished in his heart, made him angry and despairing.

The Prayer as recorded.—Jonah iv.

1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me: for it is better for me to die than to live.

The Lord's Answer.—Jonah iv.

4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH COMPLAINING OF SMALL NUMBERS, AND OF THE GENERAL CORRUPTION.

The prophet Micah was of the kingdom of Judah, and cotemporary with Isaiah and Hosea.

“Micah, admired through every age,
The babe of Bethlehem crowns thy page!
With what precision dost thou trace
The then obscure, now honored place.”

His authority as a prophet is twice alluded to in the New Testament, (Matthew ii. 5, 6, and John vii. 42.) It was given to this prophet to predict a glorious High Priest. “The clouded ark of God,” for whose peace and prosperity this prayer is made, this servant of God knew was yet to be enshrined in a glorious living temple; it had the promise of Heaven that—

“He to his own a Comforter will send
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His spirit within them, and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm
With spiritual armor.”

After lamenting over the general corruption of the Church, the prophet alludes to his firm confidence and trust in God, to the poor broken friendships of earth, and the friend who knows no changing, and in forcible language speaks of the punishment of the wicked and their sudden fear.

The Prayer as recorded.—Micah vii.

1 Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

2 The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.

3 That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward: and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.

4 The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh: now shall be their perplexity.

5. Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

7 Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

8 Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

10 Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God?

The Lord's Answer.—Micah vii.

15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things.

16 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.

The prayer with which the writings of this Hebrew poet and prophet open is full of lamentation and mourning for Zion; that few come to her solemn feasts grieves the heart of this chosen and devoted one. This prophet predicts the Chaldean invasion, and its terrible effects, bewails in this prayer the wickedness of the invaders, mourns deeply the decay of religion; his heart is full of grief, and he has come to the mercy-seat, weary of the wickedness, to ask of God how long sin must abound

and the love of many wax cold. He sorrows for the poor who are abused and oppressed. He has brought his troubles and sorrows to God; his heart heavy with its weight of wo, is poured into an ear ever ready to answer the complaints of his loved ones. As He was to the prophets, a "Guardian," a "Mystery," and a "Guide," such he is to this chosen people now, as he heard and answered their petitions because "Zion mourned," as he was ever with his people even when with weeping and lamentation the prophets plead for her, so he is with her still to listen to the lament of his poorest and most humble follower. The "Shepherd of Israel" is watching his flock with his all-seeing eye; and who are his flock? All, whoever and wherever, on mountain, hill-side, or valley, in whatever or whenever they worship the "Shepherd Jehovah," trust in him, and are saved by his grace. He encourages his children to pray for his little flock, if she is scattered and clouds hang heavy about her, for he has promised to gather his lambs in his bosom, and gently lead his erring ones. He has through his prophets predicted days of gloom, but through them he has shown us the Sun of Righteousness.

The Prayer as recorded.—Habakkuk i.

- 1 The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.
- 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!

3 Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

The Lord's Answer.—Habakkuk i.

5 Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not their's.

7 They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.

8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.

9 They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

10 And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.

11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god. [Belus or Nebo.]

HABAKKUK PRAYS IN PROSPECT OF APPROACHING TRIALS.

As an Israelite and representing the nation, the prophet addresses God as the everlasting Jehovah, and his Portion forever. He had been full of the hope that God would deal lightly with the people, and his corrections would not be so heavy as God caused him to predict they would be; he is assured by the word of Him who is Truth, that heavy and dire calamities were to be poured out, and in prospect of these he prays. His language is figurative in some degree, and weak and powerless become the people in the hands of the wicked; like the "creeping thing of the earth," or like the "fish of the sea," easily taken in the net. He alludes to the helpless Jews in the hands of the victorious Chaldeans. He shows how the successful in victory would become foolish in prosperity, and make sacrifices to vain, empty, and unsatisfying gods. He asks of God if he will permit all this. This is the theme of the prophet's prayer; he wonders the Almighty will keep silence in the midst of what seems to him unjust oppression. God worketh by means, and doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the children of men. "As thy day so shall thy strength be," he has whispered to his children's hearts. God will prepare his "own" for every trial however bitter,

even heavy as those in prospect of which Habakkuk prayed.

The Prayer as recorded.—Habakkuk i.

12 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die, O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devour-eth the man that is more righteous than he?

14 And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

17 Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

HABAKKUK'S EXPECTATION OF ANSWERS TO HIS PRAYERS.

Like a faithful watchman at his post the prophet waits further instructions from the Lord, that he might know what answer to make to those who had

rebelled and contended against his former predictions.

“Let Zion’s watchmen all awake,
And take th’ alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God,
Their awful charge receive.”

Habakkuk ii.

1 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

The Lord’s Answer.—Habakkuk ii.

2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

PRAYER OF HABAKKUK UPON SHIGIONOTH, (or musical instrument.)

This prayerful hymn of the prophet is full of fervor and deep piety, and is of peculiar interest to all, especially to those who have been tried in the furnace of affliction, and over whose path many clouds have rested. “Remember thou art

a heritor of evil, with a right to nothing good." Wait, child of hope, and yours may be the faith of Habakkuk, and with him, in the midst of trial, you "may joy in the God of salvation." Thy sorrows may humble thee, and the furnace of affliction refine thy soul, and with the prophet you too may know

"'Tis sweet to feel that he who tries
The silver, takes his seat
Beside the fire that purifies,
Lest too intense a heat,
Raised to consume the base alloy,
The precious metal too destroy.
But ah! how much of earthly mould
Dark relics of the mine,
Lost from the ore must he behold,
Ere in the silver he can trace
The first faint semblance to his face."

In this prayer the prophet speaks of God as coming from Teman—Mount Seir—and Paran, to meet them on Mount Sinai, that hallowed place. The "brightness" alluded to was an emblem of God's glory, the "coals" of the Shekinah; the "tents of Cushan" were the dwelling-places of several tribes—the Midianites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Arabians; the "curtains" were the hangings of these tents; the "bow" often represented all the weapons of war, and its being made naked signified it was ever ready. The Red Sea and the smitten rock are alluded to, and God is represented as marching

through the land of Canaan in great wrath, "wounding the neck," or cutting off the chief person in the families of the enemies of Israel. This prayer will not only attract the Christian, but him who is only a lover of poetry, and while we know God looks at the heart, and men are not heard for their much speaking, we must admire the chosen language, and the words of the inspired man as he addresses the Most High God.

The Prayer as recorded.—Habakkuk iii.

2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid : O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known ; in wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

4 And his brightness was as the light ; he had horns coming out of his hand : and there was the hiding of his power.

5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.

6 He stood, and measured the earth : he beheld, and drove asunder the nations ; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow : his ways are everlasting.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction : and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers ? was thine anger against the rivers ? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation ?

9 Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me; their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

PRAYER OF THE JEWS CONCERNING THEIR FASTS.

Sherezzer and Regem-melech were probably men of distinction among the remnant of Jews at Babylon, and were sent to the temple to inquire of the prophets and priests concerning their fasts. They kept an annual fast in the fourth month in remembrance of the breaking down of the wall of Jerusalem, one for the burning of the temple in the fifth month, another in the seventh month on the day Gedeliah was slain, and one at the time of the siege of the city commenced in the tenth month. They had wept and mourned over their sins and had fasted often, separating themselves from the world, and denying themselves ordinary food; weary of these fasts they make it a subject of special prayer. It is evident from the answer to it they had not fasted with the right spirit; although not of divine appointment, it would have been of spiritual benefit to them had they uprightly observed it; they exhibited no humility and no deep sorrow for sin, and these "appointed times" were kept as a mere matter of form; there was no heart work in it, and such a service was not acceptable although appointed by high authority. Is there not much fasting which is not "unto the Lord," even in these latter days? Where is the hunger and thirst of the spirit for

heavenly food that should accompany an acceptable fast? We fear it is sometimes forgotten in the formality of the service, or in the "customary prayer," or lip devotion, that so often attracts the heart where grace has never entered, and where the love of God is not the living, moving, acting, principle. Let no deluded worshiper come with such a "vain oblation," for by the Lord's answer to this prayer of the Jews, we know it will not be acceptable. Cease, too, thy weeping, for thy tears are not those God measures in his sacred bottle. There is a fasting of the spirit which he alone can satisfy, and there are prayerful tears, like those of Moses; silent and unexpressed as was the desire of his heart, when the Lord said I have heard thy crying."

The Prayer as recorded.—Zechariah vii.

2 When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regem-melech, and their men to pray before the LORD,

3 And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

The Lord's Answer.—Zechariah vii.

4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,

5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?

7 Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

13 Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

The Lord's further Answer.—Zechariah viii.

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,

19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and

gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

21 And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

Prayers of the New Testament.

INTRODUCTION.

BUT a part of our pleasant task is accomplished; but we trust we have gathered that "hidden fire" from the hearts of the patriarchs and prophets which sheds a halo of glory over the Old Testament, and we trust will kindle to a brighter glow the flame of devotion in the Christian heart, while it lightens the path of the wanderer to the mercy-seat and cross of Calvary. We will go softly for the ground is holy; we have come to glean in a field which the men who spake as moved by God saw only through the vail of prophecy. We have come to gather into the Christian granary a rich harvest—the Prayers of the New Testament. The wall of partition between Gentile and Jew is now broken away, and the vail that covered the most holy place is severed.

He whom Israel waited for—the theme of the loftiest, holiest strains of patriarchs and prophets—has come, treading the same earth, breathing the same air with ourselves, a perfect God and perfect man, and as we tremble at the mystery, and read of the incarnation, atonement, and sanctification by the Spirit, our hearts are melted in love, for we know we have an Intercessor pleading for us at the right hand of God. It is our precious privilege to review the wanderings of the meek and lowly Jesus with a few of earth's humble children as his followers; we watch him as he listens to the inward struggle with sin, the groan for mercy, the first whispered desire of the penitent, the wail of the lonely and broken-hearted, the sob of the afflicted, and the call of the terror-stricken, we hear his gentle encouragement to the weak, his mild rebuke to the proud, his caution to the self-righteous, his admonition to the worldly and covetous, his soothing words to the sad and sorrowing. We follow him from the low manger where slept in infancy the "God omnipotent," while on his vesture and thigh his name is written, "King of kings and Lord of lords." We see his humble parents bearing not the crown or scepter of Judah—no, the Saviour came to pour contempt on the pride of man, to bring him a beggar to the mercy-seat, that every knee might bow before him, and every tongue confess him "Lord of all." We may go with him

“ When slipping from his mother’s eye,
He went alone into the temple,
Among the gravest rabbis disputant.”

We see him in the wilderness, and on the wave, homeless and houseless, at the mountain side, always ready, and never weary of listening to and answering the prayers of his loving children.

Our Saviour has ascended to heaven, but he has not left us comfortless, for from his holy home above he is calling each one of us to follow him. He knows that in our infirmity we cannot struggle alone; his almighty arm is therefore stretched out to help, and he would have us daily ask for strength to battle with our inborn sin and corruption. He struggled with the waves of life that we too might breast the current; as he found the world a vale of tears so every Christian will find it; he tells us to

“ Lean not on earth, ’twill pierce thee to the heart,
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear,
On its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires.”

Our blessed Lord has established a throne of grace, at which we may hold as immediate communion with him as did his followers when he was made flesh and dwelt among them; the star in the East is ever guiding to the new and living way, and with the same unerring light as when it first brightened the plains of Judea, and will lead each one as truly as it did the eastern magi to where the Saviour lies.

While we take Christ as our great exemplar in our journey homeward and heavenward, it becomes us Christians to search the Scriptures to examine well and closely the lives and characters, and more particularly the prayers of those who were associated with our Saviour on his earthly career, that we may, from their petitions and his approving answer or gentle rebuke, be guided in our own prayers at the mercy-seat. We see a company of men, mortal as we are, subject to like passions, some leading lives of faith and holiness, some proud and covetous, some following closely in the footsteps of the Saviour, and others following afar off; each one of us may here find a daguerreotype of his own heart, in some one of the many who came to Jesus in prayer. In the eye of the world we may not all be self-denying and devoted as Paul, or faithful and loving as John, yet we may follow the injunction of the one to pray without ceasing, and strive for the name of the other, the "loved disciple of the Lord." At the throne of grace the rich and the poor man may meet together; the Lord is the Maker of us all, no matter what our name or profession among men. We are called to the mercy-seat, and, through this waste howling wilderness, we need aid from above to guide us. If to any God has given earthly power, and yours is an exalted station among your fellow men, trust not in your own strength, go to your Creator for wisdom, encourage in your heart

no longer the ambition that makes you forget to pray, or leads you to be satisfied with the poor crumbling crown earth can bestow. Seek at the mercy-seat that which can be found only there, a crown of immortality, which you may wear forever in heaven.

. God rules among the armies of heaven; and to the soldier he is calling from the tented field and amid the din of battle, to lift up his spirit in prayer, strengthened by it he will be nerved for every conflict, for there is for him a shield of faith, a sword of the Spirit. Under the banner of the King of kings victory is sure; in the good fight he will be able to subdue his last great enemy, and enter as a conqueror a land, where garments dyed in blood are rolled away and rumors of war never reach the ears of the ransomed. In the dark house of the body our souls must struggle with our nature's base desires, and man has many temporal as well as spiritual interests; but these interests with all their cares and anxieties should be brought before the mercy-seat, and committed to the guidance of that God who marks the sparrow's fall. Let the way to the mercy seat be a worn and beaten track, and whether your work be little or great, you will do it with your might, for beyond your toil and care you will see a home of rest in heaven. If to any have been given the light of genius or the pen of ready writers, forget not the mercy-seat, depend not on

your own strength to guide you in the use of such great and good gifts; consecrate them to your God. He who placed within you the light of mind, would have you go where its flame may burn purely, fanned by the Holy Spirit, that its beams may soften, and warm the hardened heart, and lead some convicted sinner to kneel with you before the Lord. Beware lest it be said of you in the sarcasm of the prophet, "Ye were wise to do evil." Your works will live long after you are at rest in the shadowy valley, and if written without prayer they may draw from the worldly a voice of praise, but from God a withering curse.

In this volume of prayers mothers will see that parents brought their little ones to Jesus. Oh, bring yours to him, he is ever ready to welcome you, and those he has given you. Angels are at the mercy-seat to bear your prayers upward. Teach your children to hold communion with their heavenly Father, whose kind care will be over them when earthly parents are sleeping in death, and early instill the lesson, that there is naught in all this hollow world to lighten sorrow but prayer.

We are able to point out to the poor man as he struggles with the ills of life a rich treasure; we have "a golden key to the wicket of mercy;" if you use it yours may be gifts that cannot be bought, for the price of them is far above rubies; he who died that you might win this treasure was a man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief, poor and rejected with no resting place; weep not then over thy poverty, for Christ himself was poor. "Heaven wept that man might smile."

"Therefore pray, O creature, for many and great are thy wants;
Thy mind, thy conscience, and thy being—
Thy rights, commend thee unto prayer,
The care of all cares, the grand panacea for all woes;
Doubt's destroyer, ruin's remedy, the antidote to all anxieties."

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

COLOSSIANS iv. 2.

"Thou shalt call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am."—JOHN xv. 7.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

There were two occasions on which the Lord delivered this form of prayer. The one before our notice was his sermon on the mount at the time of Pentecost, the other some months after. In our own mind there is no doubt the Lord intended this form of prayer to be used in both our public and private devotions; we infer this from the circumstances connected with its delivery both the first and the second times. The Jews, in their merely petitionary prayers never used the "amen" at the close, but where there were expressions of thanksgiving

and benediction always; we will remark this in the prayers of the Psalms, and also of the apostles. We do not for a moment suppose our blessed Lord intended us to confine ourselves solely to this form or any other, but has given it to us as a guide—a high and holy model. It is a ray from the Sun of righteousness to lead us in the right road to the mercy-seat. Coming as it does from lips that spake as never man spake, it bears the seal of heaven the stamp of the Almighty. We are taught in the verses preceding this prayer what was meant by a high and holy communion with the “hearer and answerer.” On our approach to our Saviour in prayer, we are to bid adieu for that hallowed hour to earth with her thousand cares, and to close the door of these wandering hearts; in such a frame we may erect an altar, and here and there and anywhere make known our requests unto God, and to all such secret communion we are promised an open, full reward from the great Giver of all good.

We find expressed in the Lord’s Prayer every desire of the Christian heart, every wish of the spirit struggling for a home on high. One has beautifully remarked of this prayer, “that however, in the fullness of our hearts, we may depart from this model, in the choice of our expressions, into whatever lamine we may expand the pure gold of which it is composed, yet we will find the general principles of our own enlarged application to God substantially

contained in this brief compendium." We will not now attempt to divide the links of this sacred chain, or comment on its several parts. A circle of bright and shining jewels, each brilliant and full of light in itself, it is a blaze of glory when taken as a whole, and is the richest treasure in the Christian cabinet of sacred relics. Through the long ages that have rolled away since it was first dictated to the ears of the listening multitude, it has been breathed from every Christian heart, and been the "pure incense" from the lips of infancy, and the last prayer from the soul of the aged.

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew vi.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

THE LEPER'S PRAYER.

Our Saviour had just finished his blessed sermon on the mount, and returning is met by one borne down with sickness and distress. An outcast and lonely, he is separated from those he loves, for he is

the poor victim of a loathsome and incurable disease. Human means in this hour of agony are unavailing, and he knows no arm but one is sufficient to succor him; shunned as he is by the world, avoided even by the crowd who eagerly follow the Saviour, he fears not to pour out his complaint in an ear he believes is open to the cry of the sorrowing; and was not this faith? Pure, simple, trusting faith, it burned brightly in that leper's heart,

"The bulb enshrouds the lily, and within
The most unsightly form may folded
Lie the white wing of an angel."

As this leper came to Jesus to be healed of his malady, so every soul must come. "Degraded, weak, and blind of sin, and darkened by the leprous scales"—just as you *are*, in all your uncleanness and pollution; if you are in sorrow, come; if you are despised and rejected of men, come; if you feel your own vileness, come in simple faith as the leper came; the Spirit and the Bride say come, and

The angels watch are keeping,
In their holy homes of light,
Above poor sinners weeping—
There is joy at such a sight.
To you they're loudly calling,
Saying, Come! to one and all.
While round the Saviour falling
Ye are listening to the call,
Come all the sick and suffering
To the great physician there;
Come kneel in simple, humble faith,
And breathe the "leper's prayer."

The Leper's Prayer as recorded.—Matthew viii.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew viii.

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

PRAYER OF THE CENTURION.

It is with feelings of peculiar interest we review the petition of this Roman soldier, for we regard him as the first Gentile convert to the religion and faith of Jesus. Endowed with authority in the army, the mere expressing of his will producing obedience, he comes to the meek and lowly Saviour to ask his blessing. He does not at this time crave it for himself—he comes for another. The boon he seeks is for one lying in sickness in his dwelling. He is deeply sensible of his own unworthiness, and his heart is full of that heaven-born virtue, humility, which ever becometh man in his converse with his Creator. Well might the Saviour call his faith the greatest he had seen, even in Israel. There were many alluring temptations in his position to fill his soul with pride, for his path in life was one of worldly honor and distinction. Safe in the midst of

the world's false lights, this Roman officer is shielded, for he hath the breastplate of righteousness ever raised between his heart and the world. Such faith cannot be shaken. The poor sick servant in his dwelling is to him an object of interest, and in love and faith he brings him to the "Healer." And have you, reader, no "sick servant," no "diseased soul," among those whom your heart loves, for whom you too may seek the "Healer?" Is there not one lying "sick" in your dwelling whose malady you have never once remembered at the mercy seat? Are you a "soldier of the cross," a follower of the Lamb, and will you put up no plea for the sin-sick around you?

"Man was made to wrestle, not to reign," to plead for others as well as for himself, to remember the poor and desolate, the untaught and forsaken, the sick and the dying, and the Christian's prayer takes in the world; it is full of that faith so strikingly manifested by the Centurion in his appeal to the Saviour.

The Centurion's Prayer.—Matthew viii.

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew viii.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

The Centurion still prays.—Matthew viii.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew viii.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES IN THE STORM.

Above the noise of the tempest, and sounding over the waves of the troubled Sea of Tiberias, comes the wail of the terror-stricken disciples.

Fear is within the tossing bark,
The stormy winds grow loud,
And waves come rolling high and dark,
And the frail mast is bowed.

In that open vessel the Saviour of the world lies quietly sleeping. He, of whom the holy man has said "the sea is his and he made it," is not disturbed by the tempest, or wakened by the waves. To the voice of prayer his ear is opened, and he is ready to listen when his alarmed disciples cry. He gently rebukes their want of faith, quiets their alarm,

"And slumber settles on the deep,
And silence on the blast;
As when the righteous falls asleep,
When death's fierce throes are past."

And are we not all tossed by the waves of the stormy sea of life? are we not in great danger if Christ is not at the helm to rebuke the raging billows? Lord, as he is, of the elements, so that he bringeth the wind out of his treasures, and causeth the waters of the sea to roll calmly on in their channel, so he will bring repose to the tempest-tossed soul, when the waves are the highest. We are taught by this rebuke to the disciples that Christ would have our faith grow stronger, our trust firmer, though heavy clouds are round about us, and we see no light. There is one that will break away these clouds, and show you far in the distance a port of peace and safety—a home of light and love,

"Though rocks and quicksands deep
Through all our passage lie,
Yet thou wilt safely keep,
And guide us with thine eye."

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew viii.

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inso-much that the ship was covered with the waves : but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us ; we perish.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew viii.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm.

THE PRAYER OF JAIRUS.

Come with us, reader, for earth is full of such scenes of sorrow. Death, with its dark wing, is hovering in that chamber of luxury and beauty, there are tears in that stern ruler's eyes, for he weeps by the bedside of a loved and cherished one. Wealth with its thousand resources in that dark hour cannot soothe one pang, or lessen the grief in that father's heart.

“ O ! earth ye have no sorrow,
So withering or so deep
As that within the hearts of those
Who o'er the child must weep ;

When love so strong and deathless,
From the fountain is unsealed,
There is naught in all this hollow world
Can aught of comfort yield."

The spoiler is fast setting his seal of silence on those pallid lips, and even while the death damps are gathering on the brow, there is a ray of light and hope that beams in on the dark heart of the ruler, "there is a mercy seat" where prayer may be made, there is a balm in Gilead—a great physician there. Feeble as was the ruler's faith, it led him to the Saviour. He can change the "minstrel's mournful requiem to hymns of gladness," and stay the flitting breath of the dying. Sorrow deep and heavy God often brings on his children, to bow the proud head and bend the stiffened knee in prayer. The gentle teachings that are everywhere breathing a lesson of God's omnipotence, may and do often fall unheeded on the ear, and man may be as hard and unbelieving as though there were no God, and he were not immortal; but when from stout hearts the mighty Ruler uproots affections which have twined into their very core, when he changeth the countenance of the loved one, and "sendeth it away," must it not bring the soul to a recognition of an Almighty will. There are few even among the most doubting who can lay the form of a child in the cold, dark earth, without a prayer, and as we look upward in faith, be the spark ever so feeble,

our Father in heaven will see it; in the hour of loneliness he will whisper to our spirits—"She is not dead but sleepeth."

"The Saviour raised
Her hand from off her bosom, and spread out
The stiffened fingers in his palm and said :
Maiden, arise! and suddenly a flush
Shot o'er her forehead, and along her lips,
And through her cheek, the rallied color ran,
And the still outline of the cherished form
Stirred in the linen vesture, and she clasped
The Saviour's hand, and fixing her dark eyes
Full on his heavenly face, arose."

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew ix.

18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshiped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew ix.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

THE SILENT PRAYER OF FAITH.

On his way to the house of the ruler Jairus, our Saviour was followed by a pressing crowd, but his sacred footsteps are arrested, and a cry that no human ear might hear enters his heart. It is the silent breathing of the spirit of a sick and lonely one. She dares not attract the passing multitude; the world will turn coldly upon her, and cannot satisfy her want. Conscious of her need and the Saviour's power, if she "can but touch the hem of his garment" she may be healed; but will he turn aside from his errand to the ruler's dwelling, to notice or listen to this lonely one? Hers though silent was a prayer of holier, humbler, deeper faith, than that of the ruler, and our Saviour's halting footsteps, methinks, were to sow precious seed in the hearts of the witnessing multitude, and teach us a lesson which each of us should treasure. Humility raises the soul from the dust, and brings it into contact with the spirit of the Saviour.

"Though no sweet hymn ascended,
No murmur of prayer,
Yet He knew that the spirit
Of worship was there."

He saw that this humble one had fled from every other hope and trusted in him alone to heal her infirmity; he turns aside to listen to and answer her

silent prayer. God knows the heart; its secret wishes, its earnest desires cannot be hidden from that eye that never slumbers or sleeps. The lowliest and most obscure of earth's children may hold as high and sweet communion with God as the most lofty and elevated. The moment a sinner will trust as this woman trusted salvation is his; he has only to touch the hem of the robe of righteousness, and his pollution and infirmity are gone. The "multitude" cannot keep us from the observation of the Saviour; he knows all our wants, he remembereth our frame and he knoweth we are but dust. Do we fear to kneel at his mercy-seat? Have we no words to express the anxious desire to become a Christian, to be healed of the infirmity which has been in our hearts for many long years? We have only to read of this woman's silent prayer.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near."

The Silent Prayer of Faith.—Matthew ix.

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew ix.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

THE PRAYER OF TWO BLIND MEN.

Our Saviour on his return from the ruler's house, is met by two afflicted ones. They are blind; the world with all its varied scenes is shut out from their view; they cannot even gaze on the blessed form of Jesus, in whom is centered all their hope. Though all is dark outwardly faith is shining clear and bright in their hearts; Jesus is to them the "Son of David," the promised Saviour, the King of Israel; they have come in blindness and in sorrow to seek him, for they know he will restore them. The prophets had predicted many times that the Saviour would perform the miracle of unsealing the eyes of the blind, and this is the first recorded fulfillment of the prophecy. Our Lord had given repeated proofs of his power to the "multitude," and, as if satisfied for the present, goes away from the crowd to the house of Andrew or Peter, and would then quietly draw from these blind men the

confession of their faith. It is evident they had a knowledge of the Scriptures, and believed the Saviour could open their eyes, and would answer prayer. Oh that the blinded and deluded around us would follow their example and offer their prayer. God alone can perform the miracle of opening the eyes of the spiritually blind. As our Saviour was the only one who had ever performed the miracle recorded in connection with this prayer, so can they who are blind in sin be restored only by Him. He hath said, "He that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," and he is ever ready to fulfill this gracious promise. The moral light which beams in on the soul of the once blinded is but the reflected light of heaven. It is drawn there by the earnest petition, the sincere desire, and such was the prayer of "these blind men." The more earnest we are, the brighter the light beaming into the soul; our eyes are opened, and prayer illuminates the darkened understanding with a halo of glory. The convicted sinner exclaims, "Once I was blind, but now I see;" once with my soul it was

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon;
Irrevocably dark! total eclipse;"

but day has dawned, and hope and faith have led me to the mercy-seat; there is no film before my moral vision; the eyes of my soul look over the

thorny and rugged places of this wilderness, for beyond I see "the King in his beauty, and a place where is no darkness, for there is no night there, where they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light."

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew ix.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew ix.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

A PRAYER OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

It is when our Saviour prays that every Christian heart is drawn closely to him. We feel he is "our elder brother," and we walk in the "way of the mercy-seat," following where his precious footsteps have led us, to seek comfort and blessing, strength and light. Oh! when we weep over discouragements and murmur at disappointments, we forget

the Saviour prayed ; when our path in life seems so dark we can see no "silver lining" to the clouds that thickly gather, we forget the Saviour prayed ; but it is that we might not forget this that we see the Son of God looking upward while wandering upon this desert waste. Oh ! does not the privilege grow dearer to our souls when we think of this ? The prayer which we notice at present reveals the wonderful truth that God's spirit dwells in the heart of the true Christian. This our Saviour tells us himself in the prayer. We have divine testimony of a truth whose simplicity the wisdom of earth cannot fathom, and yet whose power the simplest, most unlettered child of God may comprehend and feel. He attempts not to explain this great truth, but simply tells of it, and resolves it all into the will of "our Father in heaven." We have it from our Saviour's lips, recorded in the word of life in characters of living fire, sacred to all who believe

"To the humble disciple it is bread, but a stone to the proud and unbelieving,
A scorner shall find nothing but the husks wherewith to feed his hunger ;
But for the soul of the simple it is full of plenty and ripe wheat ;
Religion taketh by the hand the humble pupil of repentance,
And teacheth him lessons of mystery ;
Solving the questions of doubt,
She maketh man worthy of himself,
Of his high prerogative of reason,
Threadeth all the labyrinths of thought,
And leadeth him to his God."

A Prayer of our Blessed Lord.—Matthew xi.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

THE PRAYER OF PETER.

If there are any who feel confident that nothing can disturb their faith, learn from the prayer of a man devoted to the Saviour, excitable in temperament, but unacquainted with his own heart, a lesson; learn to cast your all upon Christ, for in time of trial your faith may waver like Peter's, and unless your Saviour rescue you, you may sink in the sea of despair. Alone in the mountain, our Saviour had been engaged in prayer, and at the hour of sunrise hastened to join his disciples, whom he had sent a little in advance of him in a ship. It was a frail, open vessel, and exposed to the fury of the waves, for the winds were contrary. But a cheering, peaceful voice is sounding over the waters, and a form of light and love is treading them beneath his feet. It is a voice assuring the disciples that help is nigh at hand, and that the Saviour has come to rescue them; from their troubled spirits he would

drive away all fear, and bids them trust in him. Peter, confident in his faith, and trusting in it, is upheld for a time as the waves bear him towards the Lord; but as they dash around him he becomes fearful. Then comes his wild cry for help. As long as his faith was fixed on the power of Christ he was firm and supported, but the angry billow drew him away, and he began to sink. He knows, however, though the storm staggered his faith, his great deliverer is near. His prayer proves that Peter knew where his safety lay, and where to flee in time of danger.

Our Saviour bid him come to show him his weakness, and to teach every humble follower of his since the lesson, that would we walk firmly on the waves of life's troubled ocean, we must never lose sight of the Saviour, or become deaf to the declaration, "It is I, be not afraid." We are frail beings, tossed and easily overcome by the billows, but if God is our strength we need not fear; there is a land of peace and beauty which no eye hath seen. This land can only be reached by crossing a boisterous sea. If the waves of sorrow seem about to engulf you, trust in the Saviour to sustain you; if one after another of those you love fall around you, and you are in danger of sinking under the waters of affliction, go to Jesus; he will strengthen you that you may stand upright on those waters, and you will be comforted by the truth that "they who sleep in Jesus will God

bring with him " Is it the loss of property which threatens to shake your dependence on the Almighty? listen to the voice "It is I"—in heaven is a more enduring substance. Is it broken friendships, the scattering of cherished hopes, the failure of plans, which "like a sea of trouble" threatens to overwhelm you, and lead you to forget the Saviour? remember your "light afflictions" are working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and after battling with the waves, Christ will gently lead you to a heaven of rest—the winds will cease, and the waves stop their moaning, for you will have safely walked over the waters, and with outstretched arms your Saviour waits with the joyful words, "It is I, be not afraid." O trust not in your own strength, or think your faith too strong to waver, till God has tried you as he did Peter.

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xiv.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit: and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew xiv.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

THE PRAYER OF THE SYRO-PHœNICIAN WOMAN.

Our Saviour, after denouncing the Scribes and giving offence to them by exposing their delusions, retired to the most remote part of the land in the borders of Tyre and Sidon; but his fame has reached this quiet place, and a mother a descendant of the Canaanites, a remnant of whom were settled in Tyre, comes to him with a prayer for her afflicted and diseased child. There has been a diversity of opinion as to the precise nature of the malady; some supposed it a nervous disease like epilepsy; others that Satan had such full possession of the faculties as to produce a state of mind entirely subservient to his will; but whatever it was, we know it was the cause of deep grief to the mother, and induced her prayer to the Saviour. Filled with great desire for the cure of her child, she is not diverted from her purpose, though the Saviour apparently does not hear her first petition; he is trying her

faith, as he often does that of his children now, and we would earnestly beg attention to the importunate, resolute manner of this mother. The apparently strange answer of our Saviour cannot divert her—she is determined. Our Lord's answer that he is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel refers to her Gentile origin. The Jews frequently called them dogs. Satisfied that he was the Son of David, the Messiah who was to come, she is sure he has the power of casting out devils, and is therefore convinced if she perseveres he will hear and answer her. O learn from her to be earnest; though God delay the answer to our prayer, learn from this woman to persevere.

“There are God and heaven above thee—
Wilt thou languish in despair?
Tread thy woes beneath thy feet—
Scale the walls of heaven with prayer.”

Be anxious to obtain a blessing; ask often, and do not weary. As God heard this mother so will he hear you. “His arm is not shortened that he cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear.” However great the boon you crave you will receive it, if you ask believingly and importunately.

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xv.

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same

coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew xv.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

THE PRAYER OF A MOTHER FOR HER SONS.

There is a dream of ambition in that mother's heart as, with her sons, James and John, she comes to the Saviour. Her petition is full of worldly ambition. She asks for a high seat for her sons among the wealthy and powerful of earth's children. And what mother, as she reads this, will not say—I, too, have made this prayer. Let them read it carefully, with its connection and circumstances, as

well as the rebuking answer of our precious Lord, for it will teach a lesson that involves the eternal happiness of those so near and dear to them. This mother thought, with many others, that our Saviour's reign on earth would be one of worldly triumph, of pomp and power, and with a heart filled with pride would exalt her sons to a high seat in Christ's earthly kingdom. Their temporal position is filling her heart, and is the burden of her prayer. Our Saviour mildly rebukes her, and gently tells her she knows not what she is asking. And does not this, too, teach us how short-sighted and feeble is our knowledge in regard to our own best interests? When we have this or that desire, and flee to the great Giver, should we not say "Not my will by thine be done?" Attempt not to make out your own path, for you will stumble on many a dark landing-place, when all seemed light before you. Mothers dedicate your little ones to God, guide them to his mercy-seat, let him do whatsoever seemeth good in his sight, let their spiritual interests be your great end in training them, and God will be the arbiter of their destiny, both for time and eternity.

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xx.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew xx.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

THE PRAYER OF THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

The short prayer contained in this forcible parable is full of deep meaning and vital interest to every soul. Ere we pass it by, would it not be well for us to examine ourselves as to which class we belong—to the wise or the foolish? Have we oil in our lamps, and are they trimmed and burning, or are we slumbering in darkness? In one of these classes each of us has taken his position, and it becomes us to see what answer will be made when we offer the petition, "Lord open unto us." If we are not on the side of the wise, in vain will be our cry; if we are not watching, with our lamps trimmed and burning, we will find no entrance into the kingdom of our blessed Lord; but we have a promise, sure because it is Jehovah's, that if we are ready we may

enter in. There are many about us who are bearing their lamps, but we fear they are empty. In ignorance, it may be, they are carrying them without oil, and they are neither trimmed nor burning. Some who are bearing the name of Christian, some who have enlisted under the "Captain of Salvation," but who are resting in darkness, shall find when they reach the shadowy valley there will be no light to guide them through its mazes—the door of that city, whose builder and maker is God, will be closed upon them forever. Oh! how earnestly we would plead with the careless to look at and ponder over this prayer. There is a deep meaning in its figurative language. Let every Christian weigh well this meaning; let him see to it his own lamp is trimmed and burning, that others, seeing his light, may be led to the path which he has chosen—a path of peace and righteousness, and one that leads to

"That land, and that alone,
Where tears are all forgotten,
And sorrow is unknown."

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xxv.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew xxv.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES AT MEAT WITH OUR SAVIOUR.

At table the disciples of our Saviour are seated. He has just announced a sorrowful truth which has left its impress of sadness on the countenances of each, and caused the short and earnest prayer now under consideration. Knowing their love to Jesus, as he announces that one among them is a betrayer, they, like true Christians, examine their own hearts; they would be satisfied with their present position; and as the united prayer is made to Jesus, there is one tongue silent—it is that of the betrayer. As if conscious of the great truth, that the eyes of the Lord are upon all, and that nothing can be concealed, and yet to deceive the disciples, his inquiry is made after their prayer. Judas, notwithstanding his plausible conduct, was a hypocrite and a dishonest man; sin had a full and firm possession of his heart, and Satan's deep, dark teachings, were listened to by him and guided him. As we read in the holy word of God, his sacred will, and the denunciations, so deep and heavy against every class of sinner, oh let us go to Jesus with the inquiry, with the deep earnestness of prayer, "Lord, is it I?" Let us give no rest to these bodies or souls, until an approving conscience and inward feeling of sin pardoned, and peace with God is ours, until we can feel our Fa-

ther's smile is on us, when he whispers to our spirits in the hour of prayer, "There is now therefore, no more condemnation to them who are in Christ," "for he has given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xxvi.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

The Lord's Answer.—Matthew xxvi.

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I?

The Lord's Answer.

25 He said unto him, Thou hast said.

A PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Dr. Chalmers on this subject says, (and we prefer to quote the words of this sainted man,) "I know I am treading on the confines of mystery; I cannot tell the battle our Saviour fought, I cannot compute

the terror or the strength of his enemies, I cannot say, for I have not been told, how it was that they stood in marshaled and hideous array against him; nor can I measure how great the firm daring of his soul, when he tasted that cup in all its bitterness, which he prayed might pass away from him; when with the feeling that he was forsaken by his God, "he trod the winepress alone." With his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, in the garden of Gethsemane, our Saviour is exceeding sorrowful in view of his sufferings and death. Oh the deep mystery of those tears—the mystery of those prayers! Could nothing else but these, O man, lift up thy ruined, withered soul to heaven? Could nothing but the groan, the sigh, the agony, of God's only Son, restore thee to his love and favor? Let us not dare to tread where an angel's desire may not be gratified, but listen in awe, and reverence to the Saviour's prayer.

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xxvi.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

The Answer.—Luke xxii. 43.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

“It passed not, though the stormy wave
Had sunk beneath his tread;
It passed not, though to Him the grave
Had yielded up its dead.
But there was sent him from on high
A gift of strength for man to die.
And was *his* mortal hour beset
With anguish and dismay?
How may *we* meet our conflict yet,
In the dark narrow way?
How but through Him that path who trod?
‘Save or we perish!’ Son of God.”

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOUR FROM THE CROSS.

It was the design of the Atonement—deep and unfathomable though the mystery—that our blessed Lord should endure all that was possible for human nature to suffer, both spiritually and physically. In the touching language of Isaiah, “He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” Darkness deep and heavy brooded over the earth for the space of three hours. “During the time the darkness lasted, our Lord appears to have relapsed into his garden agony. It seems to have been part of the Divine plan, that he should again labor under the hiding of the Father’s face, and again be oppressed by the consciousness of the weight and bur-

den of that sin in man for which he laid down his life."* Terror deep and heavy is in the hearts of the witnessing multitude, and the rending rocks and trembling earth proclaim, that if

"A God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm."

In agony the depth of which no finite mind can fathom—for it was the wrath of God on millions concentrated on our great Saviour's head—the mysterious prayer is made. Angels are about him in that hour, but

"I feel the farthest stars
Are all stricken and shaken,
And I know a shadow sad and broad
Doth fall—doth fall
On the vacant thrones in heaven.
Voice from the cross—My God, my God,
Why hast thou me forsaken!"

The Prayer as recorded.—Matthew xxvii.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

PRAYER OF THE MAN THAT HAD BEEN POSSESSED
WITH A DEVIL.

Quieted and calmed by the power of Jesus, the once diseased but now healed person comes to our Lord with a prayer. Like too many, he would mark out a line of duty for himself, or live quietly on in the presence of the Saviour, without spreading the good news of his remarkable cure. He earnestly asks to be admitted into the ship where our Saviour was; but there was work for this healed man to do. "He was born to wrestle not to reign." He was to lead others to the great physician who had restored him, and spread abroad the wisdom and the power of Jesus. Tell, O Christian, those who are going on in carelessness, what God hath done for you; if you are the subjects of his grace. This is not your place of rest; labor, labor still, labor on for God. You have a work to do while life lasts; that night is coming when you can work no longer. Never grow weary in well doing, but "sow beside all waters;" let not an aching wearied heart deter you, for in sickness you can work; your sweet and patient example, your smile of submission, may lead some disturbed and forsaken soul to trust in the "God of your love." In health, when the arm is strong and the intellect vigorous, you can work mightily to "the pulling down the strongholds of

sin and Satan," prayer will strengthen your arm for the battle, your fingers for the fight. Then too there is a field in which every Christian must serve a severe warfare, in the silent, secret world within him, that others may see the kingdom of God that cometh not with observation is indeed set up there. Is it not labor to struggle and strive against the rebellious thoughts, the sinful desires, the wicked impulses, which make their way in every breast, and yet this is your labor, which is indeed in vain, if your prayer for strength goes not up with it. He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city, and it is only he that can work for God who can govern himself—a government which can only be accomplished by much and earnest prayer. Let God guide you in your requests, place yourself in his hands, commend yourselves to him, that you may show to others, as well as feel yourself, the good he hath done for your soul. Oh, we fear there are many who are entering the ship where Christ is, thinking to rest in the light of his presence, without working for the advancement of his cause and kingdom in the world. Such have forgotten to pray—

"Father above, in tender mercy look
On us thy children. Through the o'ershadowing cloud
Of sorrow and mortality send aid.
Save, or we perish. We would pour our lives
Forth, as a joyous offering to thy truth ;
But we are weak. We, the bruised reeds of earth,
Are swayed by every gust."

But prayer will make us strong; prayer will fill our hearts with an energy which God alone can give, and which he requires of every created being. There is a nice distinction, and one which God makes, between the religion of action and the religion of sentiment. There are many who love the beautiful in religion, whose tears flow freely at the tale of woe, whose hearts are trained to the emotions of benevolence, but the sympathy of such a one is quicker to be spoken of than acted upon. His sensibilities are easily disgusted, and he is careful his field of action shall never lead him beyond what is refined and of good report. We speak of this class at present because the world is full of just such persons; there are so few who have professed to be the followers of Christ who are living religiously, according to the rules laid down in the inspired volume. Religion is not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth; not mere feeling, but principle; not some mysterious change, which at some time may have raised you to the seventh heaven of rapture, to let you fall deeper into the depths of sloth and inactivity: no, the "change of heart, the new birth," wakens every nerve into activity in the service of God. You must, in the language of Chalmers, "go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you with the gentleness of its murmurs." There is a feeling in the hearts of many, which

steals upon them under the semblance of virtue; it is supported by the delusive coloring of imagination and poetry; it has all the graces of literature to recommend it; yet by it vanity is soothed, and conscience lulled to repose. Oh, beware! it is nothing else but a "dream of feeling." "Go home to thy friends," every human being, the poor, the blind, the wretched, the loathsome; the black and the white are all included in the class, and methinks as these words came from the Saviour's lips, in answer to the healed man's prayer, there was a depth of meaning, which should fill our hearts with love to every human soul, which would lead us in very truth to tell all and every one how great compassion the Lord hath shown to us.

The Prayer as recorded.—Mark v.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

The Lord's Answer.—Mark v.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

THE PRAYER OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOUR.

As a part of the mysterious work of redemption, a part of the grand, the awful, and merciful plan of salvation, the mother of our blessed Lord was chosen from the humblest of earth's children to become the "blessedest of women;" lowliest, but most glorified—chosen of heaven to guard with her love and care the helpless infancy of the Redeemer. Oh, mystery! deep and strange,

"Mother, tears were mingled
With thy costly blood-drops,
In the shadow of the atoning cross."

And the Saviour, the Captain of our salvation, the Judge of the world, the Son of God himself, was "born of a virgin;" his mother, "Mary, the poor maiden of Nazareth." This prayer, or rather hymn, is full of poetry as well as piety and thankfulness for God's mercy in thus choosing her from among women to be the mother of the Saviour. A sweet strain in it refers to her ancestors, and that battle between Saul and David, when the "slight stripling of the mountain-fold" displaced and took the throne of the proud monarch. It was because the Lord had regarded her low estate, it was because "He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name." It was all the Lord's doing,

marvelous in her eyes, and to him she gives all the glory. There are no reflections in her own mind as to the cause of this great distinction; had there been, she would have shown herself unworthy. Her thoughts go out from herself, and what he has done for her engages her soul. "It is not in me, but it is in thee," is the burden of all her reflections. Herself a sinner, her mind contemplates the great benefit conferred on a ruined world, and she rejoices in God her Saviour, in the fulfillment of the promise to Israel, and the blessing infinite to future generations. Mary's soul is full of humility,

"I am not proud—not proud;
Albeit in my flesh God sent his son,
Albeit over him my head is bowed
As others bow before him, still mine heart
Bows lower than their knees. O, centuries
That roll in vision, your futurities
My future grave athwart,
Whose murmurs seem to reach me
While I keep watch o'er this sleep,
Say of me as the heavenly said, Thou art
The blessedest of women—blessedest,
Not holiest, not noblest."

There is but little revealed to us on the sacred page regarding the youth of Jesus, and from the time we see him a babe upon his mother's bosom,

"A king without regalia,
A God without the thunder,
A child without the heart to play,
Aye, a Creator rent asunder,"

until we meet him in the temple, disputing with the learned and wise, there is silence concerning him.

Here, then, is the prayer of the mother of the Saviour, a part of that "free service which is all in all to heaven," a "voice of praise and thanksgiving" to the Great God of All for the gift of his son to a lost, a perishing world.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke i.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

THE PRAYER OF SIMEON IN THE TEMPLE.

After the "custom of the law," Mary and Joseph had brought the infant Jesus to the temple. Simeon, a man of great piety, residing at Jerusalem, had received a divine intimation that he should live to see the Redeemer, and it is in the temple he meets him with his parents. He had long waited for the "consolation of Israel," the coming of the promised Messiah, and now his prayers were answered; the desire of his waiting, anxious heart gratified, the old man is permitted to enfold the Saviour in his arms, and lift his soul to heaven in gratitude. By his prayer we infer he was especially endued with the spirit of prophecy, and his mind stretches far beyond the narrow Jewish point of view. He sees the kingdom of the Redeemer extending not over one nation or people, but filling the earth with its blessings; not only a glory to the Jew, but a light to the Gentile also. He tells the mother of our Lord, "with the clear, sharp tongue of prophecy," of the sword that should pierce through her own soul.

Dr. Kitto says of this remark of Simeon, and the one preceding it, "It is an important addition to his prayer, for we learn by it that he believed that Israel would be eventually glorified in the Messiah,

yet that at first he would be to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence."

Simeon calls the child Jesus, the "Salvation of God," because in his person all the purposes and promises of salvation are centered; in him are grace, mercy, and peace, from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The old man's work is done; he is ready to obey his Father's call, ready to lie down in peace, ready for his home in heaven.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke ii.

27 And he came by the spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

THE PRAYER OF ANNA.

The union of old age and piety is always attractive. It is a peaceful twilight after a long and busy day; life mellowed into ripeness; the "start and the flush, and the idle dream all over," and a temporary calm for the soul ere it takes its journey toward its

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everlasting home. The sketch of the character and life of Anna in the Bible furnish materials for an interesting biography, and to the Christian one of peculiar attractiveness. Lonely and desolate, and yet not *lonely* and *desolate*, although for many years a widow, she had chosen that Friend for her guide who is the "God of the widow, and father of the fatherless." Anna was a woman of prayer, living near to the temple, and as we are not told of her having any family, we find her devoting herself to God, free from the vexations incident upon domestic duties. It does not seem to have been necessary for her to be careful and anxious about anything but the spiritual welfare of herself and people, not that these things should exempt any from the duties they owe to God, for there are few who cannot imitate Anna in her daily stated times of prayer, and though domestic duties may crowd and press us sometimes, like the traveler who stops to take necessary rest and food, we may still keep on our journey, if we gather daily strength for it from prayer. This devoted Christian came into the temple at the time of Simeon's prayer; her eyes were permitted to gaze on the "Hope of Israel," the infant Saviour. Like an active Christian she spake of him to the pious remnant of her people; spoke of redemption and its wondrous plan—"out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is but a poor, paltry excuse the Christian offers that he has no

gift of speech in this matter, that his tongue is sealed in silence, when careless sinners are all around them. Is your soul full of love to your God, and can you not tell of it to the dying, perishing children of men? Is your heart bursting with the riches of his grace, which He has poured into your otherwise ruined soul, and are your lips sealed, and that grace a secret you are shutting within the portals of your own heart? We have some excuse to make for natural diffidence, but the grace of God will make the "righteous as bold as a lion." Learn timid Christian to fear your God, not man—poor, puny worm of the dust, bound to an eternity of misery or happiness. Oh! it is time the closed lips of the Christian should be unsealed. Ye, who are young, look at the aged Anna. Tell me not of experience and years in her case fitting her more than you for God's work; there is no such thing as age in Christian life. The moment a sinner believes, he has a heart full of rich treasures God bids him dispense among the famishing and hungry. Anna had been a working, active, devoted, prayerful Christian all her life long; this brought her a serene and quiet old age. Life was full of pleasant memories—her prayers were stored in heaven. Would you be like Anna imitate her example; neglect not the little circle where two or three are gathered to worship God; neglect not the holy sanctuary, neglect not the duties of the closet—and your experience will be sweet; "Age cannot

wither you;" and when "thy summons comes," like "one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him," you shall "lie down to pleasant dreams."

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke ii.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

THE PRAYER OF SIMON PETER.

On the calm bosom of a peaceful lake, in a boat near the shore, are a few poor fishermen; they have toiled all day, and as yet have taken nothing. They are loved by the Saviour, and as the eager crowd press closely after him, he enters the vessel of Simon, to talk with him and make there an exhibition of his power. Their boat is pushed lightly a little farther from the shore, in obedience to the command of Jesus, and the nets let down into the water; but so great is the weight of fish in them they can scarcely be brought up again. Overcome by the

words and the miraculous power of the Saviour, Simon Peter in deep humility prostrates himself at his feet, confesses his own sinful nature and weakness. His prayer is full of the feeling of unworthiness expressed by every truly convicted and converted person. Scott says, this miracle itself was emblematic of many things relative to the preaching of the gospel, and especially of Peter's great success on the day of Pentecost.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke v.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart not from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

The Lord's Answer.—Luke v.

10 And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

THE PRAYER OF PETER ON THE MOUNT.

It is the hour of prayer, for our Saviour has taken with him his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, for the especial object of devotion, and we are expressly told they went up into a mountain to pray. It was on this occasion the wonderful scene of the transfiguration of Christ occurred, and the amazement created by it in the mind of Peter bewildered him so that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

Two angelic beings were near the Saviour, talking with him. They were the glorified spirits of Elias and Moses. Peter's prayer seems prompted by a fear that these beings would disappear. Dr. Kitto says Moses and Elias were the chiefs of the law and the prophets, who came, as it were, to give testimony and homage to the Consummator, who had in these latter days appeared, to finish the work which they had in their day been employed to advance and prepare.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke ix.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

The Answer.—Luke ix.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.

THE PRAYER OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

A wanderer from his father's love, his home and friends, the prodigal is in a state of abject servitude and misery. The world with its thousand syren

voices, had lured him from the path of virtue; dissipation in its most bitter form had made him wretched; his eyes had been dazzled by the attractive light of a wasting, consuming fire, and he is ready to perish. In his present forlorn condition, the poor man, in the expressive phrase of Scripture, "came to himself," he has all along acted against reason, judgment, and conscience; sin has blinded him, but now deep and bitter reflections awaken him to a sense of degradation and misery; but there is something to be done if he would be relieved—he must resolve. Observe the promptness of his resolution after he sees his true state; perhaps his father will hear him although he has despised his authority and wasted his substance. There is a hope—a "beam of comfort like the moon through clouds;" it inspires him to "arise and go to his father," and while he is yet a great way off, that father forgives him, has compassion on him, falls on his neck as he comes to him, and receives him as a child. God is willing to receive every sinner just as this father did his son, if "coming to himself," he resolve in prayer to seek him.

"The greatest attribute of heaven is mercy;
And 'tis the crown of justice, and the glory,
Where it may kill with right,
To save with pity."

There is a general and intellectual conviction of sin which remains as it were shut up in the heart or

understanding, and there is another which controls all the affections and acts, which makes a man a Christian; it leads him to prayer, and makes him prompt in serving God. David was a man in whose life we see distinctly these two states of feeling, one before Nathan came to him and the other after. The latter was the feeling of the prodigal. We do not find him remaining where he is, but active in using the means to ameliorate his condition, he goes to his father. Reader, have you done this? Are you often at the mercy-seat confessing your sin against heaven? We know that many have felt themselves sinners, their convictions have been deep, billows may have rolled over the soul mountains high, and yet the waters may not have washed away one sin, or cleansed it from its deep pollution. You must go with the spirit of the prodigal; your heavenly Father will come to meet you at your first resolve to seek him. There is joy through all the shining courts of heaven when one repenting sinner comes to the mercy-seat.

“Satan trembles when he sees

The weakest saint upon his knees.”

But God, his Father and his Friend, is there to meet him. It may be said by some who have no idea of God's justice, no conception of his broken law, our own case and this prodigal are entirely dissimilar; our course has not been one of recklessness and folly; to such we would say, sin has made you,

like him, miserable and wretched; sin has made you a wanderer from your Father's heart and love, and the words of living fire on the page of Holy Writ tell you, "If a man say he hath no sin he deceiveth himself." All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. As long as you do not arise and go to the Father whom you have offended, you are in a state of abject misery; however brightly the world may smile upon you, you are feeding on husks. Oh, be warned in time! We would lead you to return with the prodigal, we would show you the affectionate embrace of the Father, the hearty welcome; and the peace of that restored heart. His prayer is simple but efficacious; it enters the father's heart, and so will yours if you will go with him.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xv.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

The Answer.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

THE PRAYER OF DIVES.

The following prayer is a wail of agony from the depth of that hell to which all the impenitent are destined; the day of mercy with that soul is over, and the time for prayer to God passed away forever. Through the long ages of a "limitless future" will that wail come up deeper and louder to tell of the agony of a ruined soul. Our Saviour in his teachings to the multitude has introduced this parable of the rich and poor man, which, in its grand outlines, is being continually acted out under the eye of even the most careless observer at the present time. The earthly and spiritual condition of the two men are forcibly delineated, and the final result is given to show us the destiny of all who must come under either one of the classes these two men so strikingly represent. We shall be particular in our notice of this prayer, hoping we may, by our plainness of speech, arrest the eye of the mere worldling. He who makes it, it will be observed, is not guilty of the grosser vices; his were sins we may call "popular sins," fashionable among those whom the world worships, and whose favor many are so earnestly seeking. The rich man was of the stock of Abraham, a Jew, and we may infer had a form of godliness also. He fared sumptuously—all that wealth could bring in the way of luxury was

his; but these were not enumerated as sins, he might have had all these and been a devoted child of God. We cannot think him a miser, for his table was sumptuous, and no doubt he entertained those who were congenial to him; but we may infer safely they were not the lowly followers of Christ, or Lazarus would not have been despised. Methinks I hear some reader ask, What, then, was this man's sin? and to such we would reply, In not using his wealth to the glory of God—he had forgotten the poor and the sick, the miserable and dying beggar. Grace was a stranger to his heart; that grace which brings with it a tenderness of spirit that enables its possessor to feel that earth's poorest and most miserable children are brethren; that will not permit him to hear one sigh of the distressed without relieving it, and will keep ever in his hand "the cup of cold water" which he, as a Christian, dare not or will not withhold. There are many, dear reader, who are living as this rich man lived, many who can weep over imaginary wo, but never see the real misery which they may lighten; many of our own loved friends whose hearts beat quicker when told of this or that scene of sorrow, but who will not go with you to the midst of it; there is many a poor beggar lying at their gates, whom they are despising and sending empty away. God forbid you should ever be brought to the misery of Dives! Ere the echo of his sor-

rowing wail dies away on your ear, be warned of your own danger. I tell you of it in the voice of Christian love, the gay and worldly are singing to your listening ears a sweet song that is lulling you into a dangerous sleep, and no word of condemnation comes from the world about you to show you your condition; you are not desolate and forsaken, for "the rich have many friends," yet the few chosen of God's children are asking you to go with them; they are praying for you, and beseeching you to save yourself from the fate of Dives. This prayer, and indeed the whole parable, is figurative, and "Abraham's bosom," according to Scott, means a place near that "father of the faithful," that occupied by the beggar, and is intended to shadow forth the joy of the believing soul after death; the position of the rich man exhibits a vivid picture of the misery of the lost. The latter part of the narrative furnishes the true Christian with a powerful argument against those false doctrines which the holy word predicts shall deceive the very elect; it tells the tormented spirit "one shall not rise from the dead to minister to his brethren in holy things." God has his own shining hosts to camp about the good man's tent, but they are not the souls of those who have entered the pit of despair. Angels form a quiet ministry to those who are the heirs of salvation; how, or when, or where, it is not given to man to know, for they belong to the army of God, who

does his own will among the shining troops before his everlasting throne; his ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts our thoughts. We know his children are guarded and watched while they are lingering near his mercy-seat. We have Moses and the prophets, the voice of justice and of tender compassion; we have the warnings of earthly friends, and a vivid picture of the eternally happy and eternally miserable; and is not this enough? God in his answer would and does say, enough!

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xvi.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

The Answer.—Luke xvi.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Continuation of Dives' Prayer.—Luke xvi.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

The Answer.—Luke xvi.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

PRAYER OF THE TEN LEPERS.

On the borders of Samaria or Galilee, a company of men suffering with leprosy, having heard of the fame of Jesus, and his ability to cure this hopeless disease, have come to beseech him to heal them. Lepers are among the last who are mentioned as seeking the aid of Jesus, and when his great power was spoken of by those who followed him, many said, he hath not yet healed a leper. The ten acknowledge the power of Jesus, their disease is the same, their prayer for help the same, but in the spirit of but one is that heaven-born feeling, gratitude. Christ had listened to their prayer and healed them, and sent them to their priests to obtain from them a formal attestation of their cure—to perform the rite of purification according to law. All were healed, but there is only one who returns thanks for the benefit received. Our Saviour's question as to where are the nine, methinks ought to startle the

heart of every careless Christian, for there are many, very many, who have received daily and hourly mercies, and have forgotten with these nine to give thanks to God. Jesus commends the faith of the grateful-hearted man, as he falls in thankfulness at his feet. It is probable the one who returned and glorified God, alone of all of them really believed in Jesus as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. This faith in his heart caused his thanksgiving, for we are told the others went back to the temple, and it may be there returned thanks to God; but their gratitude was not the offspring of faith—the spontaneous outbreak of a Christian heart, and thanksgiving to Jesus as their immediate benefactor; else, why does the Saviour commend so particularly the conduct of this one leper? It would be well for the reader to refer to the few verses following the leper's prayer. It will more distinctly show him the difference between them, and open the heart of the one leper, in whom the "kingdom of God" was indeed set up.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xvii.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off;

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

The Lord's Answer.—Luke xvii.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN

We will not separate these two prayers, for, connected like the light and shadow in a picture, the effect is more startling, and may make a deeper impression on the heart. Here are two men going up into the temple to pray, just as we all go at the sound of the Sabbath bell, and a few at the hour for social prayer. There is nothing in the exterior of these two men that would particularly attract our attention, for both have gone there to pray. It is after they enter we observe the difference. The one with drooping eyes comes like a grateful almsman and humbly begs his bread; the other is like one "the music of whose own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony." One is "poor, and blind,

and naked," the other full, proud, and satisfied. One has seen himself with the eye of faith a lost and ruined soul, and seeks the only remedy ; the other's heart still nurses that deadly passion which blinds him to his sin, and brings before his deluded vision his imagined virtue. One would exalt, the other abase himself, when communing with the Omnipotent Jehovah. Let us examine well these two prayers, for they represent two large classes in this world of ours. The Publican knew himself—the Pharisee did not. This knowledge made the one humble, and the want of this filled the heart of the other with pride.

"Acquaint thee with thyself, O man ! so shalt thou be humble ;
The hard, hot desert of thy heart shall blossom with the lily and
and the rose ;
The frozen cliffs of pride shall melt as an iceberg in the tropics."

All that thou hast done, all thou canst ever do in thy own poor, puny strength, can never win for thee the crown in heaven. God has to do with thy heart. All its secret springs, its hidden desires, its unseen emotions, are naked and open to that all-seeing eye, which knows no sleeping. Then, wherefore wouldst thou boast ? frail worm of the dust, a withering flower, a fading leaf, a morning vapor, or an evening cloud ! Be wise—fight against thy pride ; with humble prayer thou canst subdue the evil, hateful passion.

“Mark, amid all his transformations,
The complicate deceitfulness of pride;
And the more he striveth to elude thee,
Bind him the closer in thy toils.
Prayer is the net that snareth him;
Prayer is the fetter that holdeth him.
Thou canst not nourish pride, while
Waiting as an almsman on thy God.”

Would we have our prayer acceptable, we must remember the humble Publican—remember God himself hath uttered the eternal truth, “There is not one good; no, not one.” This is difficult for the merely moral man to comprehend; he may, like the Pharisee, give “tithes of all he possesses,” but he has never yet laid the offering of his heart, broken and contrite, on God’s altar. He cannot, until God takes the film from his blind eye, see the deep, dark shadow of his indwelling corruption; nor will he, till he can make from his heart the prayer of the poor Publican. Oh! there are many among those we love who know not the deep sin of their hearts; circumstances have made them refined, society with the good has made them winning and gentle, but beneath all this, behind this soft and silken curtain, which the world so much admires, is a human heart, “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” We would, with a gentle hand, draw aside this curtain; we would show you just such a heart as your own, for such was that of the Pharisee, and yet it is not I who can do this, it is the reader of the secrets

of all hearts. I may point out the way to the mercy-seat, and tell you there, and there alone, is your remedy; the spirit in which you may come, learn for yourself in the narrative below, and may God give you strength to come in humility.

The Prayers as recorded.—Luke xviii.

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The Lord's Answer.—Luke xviii.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

THE PRAYER OF THE YOUNG RULER.

It is with feelings of peculiar interest we read the prayer of this young man, for we regard him as strikingly representing in his outward circumstances, as well as in the state of his heart, a large class of the young and attractive about us. Loved

and courted, occupying a high station, and surrounded by all the luxuries wealth could procure; trained religiously—for he seems to have an acquaintance with the law of God, a theoretical knowledge of his duty—his outward observances were, no doubt, strictly gone through with, and yet when he comes to Jesus, he seems surprised that his heart was not right, that that eye whose power extended into the hidden recesses and windings of his soul, saw the dark plague-spot blackening the otherwise attractive character. The young ruler's wealth had made him covetous;

“The lust of gold, unfeeling and remorseless,
The last corruption of degenerate man,”

had made him forgetful that God had given these riches merely as a loan to be paid back with interest in the prayers of the poor man, in the grateful acknowledgment of the sick and suffering he should have relieved, in the rays of light shining out from the darkened soul he had been the instrument of opening to God's truth, in the smile of the oppressed he had unburdened, and in the clear laugh of the freed prisoner to sin, whose chain he had unloosened. Young man, these were works you might have done, and deep and heavy the weight of your sins of omission following on in the train of the one thing thou lackest. And the world is full of the young who are walking in your footsteps, who

know not their own hearts, who are living on and dreaming on, burying in this or that cherished sin, all that is good and lovely, useful or attractive about them. Are you covetous, you are not a Christian; else, why all over the sacred page, do we see such bitter denunciations against this sin? Are you forgetful of the poor, you cannot be accepted; it was the sin that sent the young man away sorrowing. If there is in thy heart one shadow of this soul-ruining sin, oh, fall at the mercy-seat! oh, see what good thing thou lackest to make thee acceptable! oh, give your early years to God! There is a glorious promise for all that do this—"Those that seek me early shall find me." Life is fleeting fast away; one year follows quickly upon another, and it is soon, soon over, with its toils, its cares, its joys, and sorrows. A hope, a smile, a tear, these are all; and then, oh God! thou knowest, "Every muffled drum is beating funeral marches to the grave;" we see the young and loved falling around us, many as attractive to the world as this young ruler, but in whose hearts we fear one thing is lacking; it is not enough that you should be steady and regular in the performance of stated religious duties, your heart must be right in the sight of God, you must often enter the closet for self-examination and prayer; without this no one can be in the world and not of it, with it he can mix with men and breathe the atmosphere of heaven, can walk in the dust and mire and never

be soiled or polluted, for his spirit is soaring in a purer, holier air, where prayer bears up his wings, and will bear them upward, till they soar unfettered in worlds where sin is forever banished, and all is purity and joy.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xviii.

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good ; none is good, save one, that is God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

The Lord's Answer.—Luke xviii.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing : sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOUR FROM THE CROSS.

“ Helplessly, heavily—

On the cheek that waxeth colder,

Whiter ever—and the shoulder—”

Where the government was laid, death is slowly creeping ; but will the great heart still beating there be full of pity for a world, and show no pity for itself ? Will it not unearth this cross ? Is there

no prayer to the Father that his own place be restored to him? Oh, no. Far above the voice of trembling, saddened nature, rises the prayer, Father, forgive them, above the taunts and jeers, above the contempt and scorn, these blessed words are heard.

“No rod, no sceptre, is
Holden in his fingers pale—
They close instead upon the nail.”

And still the prayer—words of mercy, words of hope to lost and ruined man. Oh, as we ponder over them, methinks they would drive from every heart each feeling of hatred, every thought but that of love to God and all his creatures. If those you love have turned coldly upon you, remember this prayer, “Father, forgive them;” they are the dying accents of a Saviour who died to redeem those who hated him. If for your tears of pity you have a frown of ingratitude, remember the precious words; if you look for sympathy, and meet with the heartless and unfeeling, still remember them; if you would lead the gay and thoughtless to the mercy-seat, and your endeavors are treated with bitterness and scorn, let your prayer be, Father, forgive them. Oh, methinks it is dearer, richer, holier than any on the sacred page; in it is the Christian’s joy, the Christian’s hope, for daily we sin against the pure and holy God; but above our call at the mercy-seat we hear the sweet words of a pleading intercessor, they are the never-dying echo of the prayer of the Saviour

from the cross, "Father, forgive them," and every bowed spirit at the "throne of grace" makes new notes of joy from "the unworn string of an eternal worshipping." "Father, forgive them," is sounding yet above the song of seraphs, and the music of these words will never die away, till all the ransomed are gathered into their homes of light above. Without this prayer man would be eternally lost, no ray of hope would light up the dark, the fathomless abyss before him; but this prayer of a bleeding, dying Saviour is his salvation. No sooner is our own knee bent in worship, than in accents of love and tenderness the words of Christ, our great intercessor, are heard in the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" know not, for they cannot conceive the depth of the smallest sin against infinite love and mercy; sin, that sent the Son of God to bleed and die that man's ruined soul might be lifted to the clear, still air of heaven. Will you, then, be a prayerless being, when Christ is pleading for you? will you not pray for yourself? No matter what your situation among men, despised, and poor, and sick, and miserable, you may be sure that Jesus is pleading for you; your prayer, if sincere, will enter his ear. Give to him the homage of your heart, "render strong praise and benediction from your feeble, mortal lips," for "incense-smoke out of a little censer may fill heaven." At the mercy-seat God has given you a place; be there often, be there

much, and whisper in the ears of others that Christ is there, and as you kneel together, in music sweeter than the ear hath heard, the echo of these words will linger in your hearts, "Father, forgive them. '

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xxiii.

34 Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

THE PRAYER OF THE THIEF FROM THE CROSS.

"I see

Beyond the city crosses three,
And mortals three that hang thereon,
Ghast and silent to the sun ;
And round them blacken, and welter, and press,
Staring multitudes, whose father
Adam was, whose brows are dark
With Cain's corroded mark,"—BROWNING.

On either side of the Saviour were crucified with him two malefactors; one of them seems to be seriously affected by his position, for from his rebuke to the other we know he was satisfied that the Saviour was suffering innocently, and that he was the Messiah, the king of Israel. Overcome by his convictions, and led by the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, he becomes repentant, and prays to the suffering Saviour.

“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,
Redemption is full through his blood.”

“Tis faith that still leads us along,
And lives under pressure and load ;
That makes us in weakness more strong,
And leads the soul upward to God.”

It is true, the case of this thief is a peculiar one, for when we consider his position we might be led to imagine it an unusual exhibition of God's mercy to so great a sinner; but it furnishes encouragement to all to come to Jesus, however guilty they may have been, and the same mercy and forgiveness shown to the repenting malefactor will be given to others. All God requires of any is this turning in faith to him, this relinquishing of self, and throwing ourselves upon him who is mighty to save, and strong to deliver; his pierced hands are still stretched out to lay gentle hold on every soul, as on that of the departing thief. This guilty man had only to feel himself a sinner, and come to Jesus. So you must come, sinner; you may not have been a malefactor, but you have broken God's holy law. and there is no remedy but in Jesus. Come, then, “just as you are,” without one plea, save that the Lord hath died for thee, and thine shall be the glory and the crown of paradise. We cannot leave this prayer without considering an argument that many would draw from it in favor of death-bed repentances.

This is the only instance of the kind in the sacred page, and while it encourages the most vile to hope in God's mercy, it offers not the shadow of an excuse to any for putting off the making of their peace with God. "Now is the accepted time, the day of salvation," and, reader, as your eye rests on these words of God, you know there is danger in delay. Remember the foolish virgins sought no oil till alarmed at the bridegroom's approach. Oh, come now to God, when you are warned; your soul is full of the dark and troubled waters of sin, continually casting up mire and dirt, "yet a spirit-wind may blow white those waters," and wash your soul in the blood of the crucified Jesus. Ten thousand voices are calling you to come. This poor thief may have never been told of God; your case is not like his; light is all around you, friends are whispering to you come, the fresh made graves of those you love speak in a soft voice to your soul, be ye ready; and the Saviour is whispering, in this "story of the cross," I am waiting for thee, waiting for thee in paradise! Oh, turn believing unto Jesus.

The Prayer as recorded.—Luke xxiii.

42 Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

The Lord's Answer.—Luke xxiii.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

THE PRAYER OF A NOBLEMAN.

Our blessed Saviour had lingered in his wanderings at Cana of Galilee, where he had exhibited to many his miraculous power. While there he was besought by a nobleman of Herod's court to heal his son, who lay dangerously ill at Capernaum, which was a considerable distance from where the Saviour now was. The faith of the nobleman is weak, like a small spark it lay in his heart ready to be kindled. He seems to imagine that the Saviour must go with him to the dying bed; but in the prayer and answer we are taught a useful lesson—God is everywhere, his presence is about and around us, he is the omniscient, omnipresent Jehovah; in proportion as we feel this in our hearts, our faith is strong or weak. There are times in the lives of all Christians when Jesus is especially near; and then, again, in the language of Job, they are led to exclaim, "O, that I knew where I might find him, I would come even to his seat." Christ is always present when the prayer is earnest, heartfelt, believing, the eye of the spirit sees him, and the calmed soul is sure of his presence. Our Lord, in order to increase the faith of this nobleman, orders him to go home; he is obedient to the command; and as the servant meets him with the joyful news of his son's recovery, he gives thanks to the Lord. There is in that nobleman's

house a believing family circle—all love the Lord Jesus. This side of heaven there is no picture so full of beauty and interest to the Christian as this household presents ; no dark line mars its harmony, for they are one in Christ, with hearts united by a chain of the Saviour's forging—spirit-links to bind those hearts through time and eternity.

United on earth, and united forever,
 Death cannot part, death cannot sever ;
 Hands knit in love, are hands never parted,
 One in Christ Jesus are all the true-hearted ;
 Pure spirits on earth, will be spirits in heaven,
 For spirits in heaven are spirits forgiven.
 You here sound the key note, above is the song
 The ransomed will sing in the bright happy throng.
 Now children in knowledge, then children no longer,
 For faith there is perfect, here faith groweth stronger.
 One in your worship, and one in your love,
 One in your praises, with angels above.

The Prayer as recorded.—John iv.

46 And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

The Lord's Answer.—John iv.

48. Then Jesus said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend, and they said unto him, yesterday, at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, thy son liveth, and himself believed and his whole house.

THE PRAYERS OF MARTHA AND MARY.

In the small village of Bethany, on the southeast side of the Mount of Olives, lived Mary and Martha, and their brother, Lazarus. They were a godly family, and seem to have been especially beloved by the Saviour, as their house was his frequent resort. We would suggest to the reader a careful perusal of this whole chapter. The characters of these two women are simply yet vividly drawn—both different, yet both loving the Lord Jesus.

When Lazarus was taken ill, the anxious sisters had sent a message to our Saviour, and it may appear strange to the casual reader, that attached as he was to this family, he did not hasten immediately to them, or then use his power to prevent the death of Lazarus. It will be seen that after the message,

“He whom thou lovest is sick,” two days elapsed before the departure of the Saviour for Bethany. This delay was to make the miracle the greater, for the body had lain in the grave and corrupted, when the sisters came out to meet Jesus. If he had been there, as the sisters say to him, and prevented the death, or suffered him to die and raised him, there would then have been an appearance of ostentation in the act, which nowhere stamps the movements of Jesus. According to a Jewish custom, Mary and Martha were surrounded by comforters, who were wont to weep seven days with those who were in affliction, and they were thus situated when the message was given to Martha that Jesus had arrived; in great haste she rose to meet him, not even delaying long enough to tell Mary the glad news, who “sat still in the house.”

“One grief, one faith, oh, sisters of the dead,
Was in your bosoms.
And which to Him, the All-seeing and All-just,
Was loveliest, that quick zeal, or lowly trust?”

Oh, mortal! question not, for we are told he loved Mary and her sister Martha, and they found sympathy, full and satisfying, in the Saviour’s heart and tears. The answer of our Saviour to Martha is somewhat vague to her understanding, and we infer from her words to him that she addresses him as a prophet, and not as the Incarnate Son of God. He reminds her that life is in Him, and is imparted to

the faithful by union with Him, and as if to impress the truth upon her, questions her closely and convincingly of her belief in Him as the Messiah. It is then that she awakens to a knowledge of the truth, and hastens to call her sister, who uses the same language; they do not ask a restoration to life for their brother—they know not what they need; they know Jesus can do all things, and in sorrow and grief they come to him.

The Prayers as recorded.—John xi.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.

22 But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

The Lord's Answer.—John xi.

23 Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Mary's Prayer.—John xi.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The Lord's Answer.—John xi.

35 Jesus wept.

The Prayer of Jesus at the grave, as recorded.—John xi.

41 And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

The Answer.—John xi.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin.

THE PRAYER OF PHILIP.

Philip seems to have possessed rather confused ideas with regard to the divinity of the Saviour; we infer this from not only the prayer, but the gentle rebuke of Jesus in reply to it. It seems the simple announcement of the truth that he was one with the Father, was not sufficient for Philip, but he wished some remarkable demonstration of it; and are there not many Philips now? many who are not willing to accept this mystery simply because it is the truth of God. Shall a man comprehend his Maker? or finite fathom infinity?

If God be nothing more than one, a child can compass the thought. But seraphs fail to unravel the wondrous unity of three.

“It is written, and so we believe,
Waiting not for outward proof,
Inasmuch as mysteries inscrutable
Are the clear prerogatives of Godhead.”

Christ's answer to Philip is full of love, and his explanation of the union of believers with himself and the Father, is clear and comforting to the Christian heart. However weak your faith, or burdened your spirit, you have here a gentle word of encouragement. In view of his separation from his disciples, Jesus seems to pour out a large and full measure of those precious promises which have cheered the path of many a lonely and broken-hearted one, many a timid and struggling child, to the arms of that “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” We have here, too, another announcement of that sacred truth, that Jesus is our intercessor and advocate with the Father, that though the world see him not, yet his children see him, and he is ever present to comfort and guide them.

The Prayer as recorded.—John xiv.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

The Lord's Answer.—John xiv.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

THE PRAYER OF JUDAS, NOT ISCARIOT.

This prayer and its answer furnishes a satisfying evidence to all believers that Christ is ever present with them. Our Saviour, in reply to Judas, as to how he would manifest himself when the time of his departure came, reminds him that a disposition to obey his commandments and love him would always be a proof of his presence with them. As a precious remembrance he promised peace that the world know not of, peace and joy in believing. Let not your hearts be troubled, he says, but rejoice; my day of humiliation is over; I have taken upon myself the form of man; have been made flesh and dwelt among you; my Father is, in one sense, greater than I—Scott says, as an ambassador is equal in nature, but is inferior in office, to the prince that commissioned him, so Christ, in humbling himself, and leaving the Father, as God manifest in the flesh, has made the words that occur in the answer to this prayer appropriate. Our Saviour has promised peace to all that love him and keep his commandments; no doubts or fears should find a home in the hearts of those who follow him; nothing but joy, whose tide swells broader and deeper as they trust in the promises, and seek the mercy-seat. We cannot refrain from dwelling a moment on a sin common among Christians, and indulged by those who

no doubt are the followers of Christ, but they know not how many they are keeping away from those paths of pleasantness and peace in which they have been permitted to walk ; it is the sin of clothing the joyful religion of Jesus in a dark robe of gloom, and in wearing upon the countenance the forbidding, repulsive look of sorrow. This is not the index of that joy and peace which may be the Christian's, that spirit which the Saviour promised to the praying Judas, and which he has left as a legacy to his children. Christ came in love, and not with a rod ; let us then imitate his blessed example, when we would win others to walk with us in the "green pastures, and by the side of still waters." If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, if our eyes have been opened to see ourselves as sinners, and we have been washed in the blood of Jesus, and are clinging to his cross ; if the promises, and the full and sufficient sacrifice, are ours, have we not reason, above all others, to rejoice ? If we cannot, the fault is not in our religion, it is in ourselves, and somewhere in a dark corner of our hearts sin is still treasured. We regard it a sin to be gloomy ; the Christian may have tears to shed over his wanderings, and sighs to heave over the wickedness about him, but these belong to the hidden sanctuary of his own chamber, and not to the world. We regard it as a Christian duty always to be cheerful ; much may here be said of natural temperament, and the

great influence of the body over the mind, but prayer is a panacea for every kind of weakness, either mental, spiritual, or physical; the whole man is brought under its power, and the weak one may forget his pains, the nervous be quieted, the sick may rejoice, as long as he lingers near the Saviour, trusts in the promises, and loves the mercy-seat.

The Prayer as recorded.—John xiv.

22 And Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?

The Lord's Answer.—John xiv.

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

A PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOUR.

This prayer has been the foundation of the church of God from the creation of the world, is now, and ever will be, to the consummation of all things. Through all the instructions of our Saviour to his apostles, he addressed them as the Incarnate Son of God, but when he comes to the mercy-seat in prayer, he comes as a man imploring of his Father. He asks of God to glorify his Son, to restore him that place in heaven which he had with the Father before the world was. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." This prayer was not only made for the eleven apostles, but included the seventy disciples, and the whole church of God, the whole body of believers, no matter what their name or station, rank or office, among all generations of men. Lift up your hearts, ye poor and forsaken ones. If ye have

been born again, the Father hath given you to the Saviour. This prayer is yours—your hope, your comfort, your consolation, your all. Our Saviour by it consecrates himself as the great atoning sacrifice for lost and ruined man; he tells us the world will hate those that love him, because they are not of the world, and prays that the Father may sanctify them by his truth—his word is truth. By the “son of perdition,” is meant Judas, the betrayer of his Lord and Master. The Saviour’s words, in the few concluding verses, should encourage unity among Christians, take away every wall of partition that now separates the church of God, and should make all true believers one in Christ Jesus. In the language of another, we would say here, “The religious professions and opinions of some have too much of mere machinery in their composition. If every wheel, pivot, chain, spring, cog, or pinion, be not exactly in its place, or move not precisely according to a favorite and prescribed system, the whole is rejected as unworthy of regard. Ye who are so warmly striving for your rights as churchmen, and churchwomen, in vain do you try to narrow the limits of these world-covering words of the Saviour’s prayer; ye may not, ye cannot, ye dare not, when ye read and ponder over them. Christ loves us all; in the language of scripture, “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” his seal is upon all those who name the name

of Christ and depart from iniquity ; we are all one in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, on earth, and will all be gathered into one fold, under one Shepherd, in heaven.

The Prayer as recorded.—John xvii.

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee :

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are mine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine

own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name ; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ;

21 That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one :

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it : that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

A PRAYER OF THE APOSTLES.

It was the custom of the followers of our Saviour, while he was yet on earth, to meet for conference and prayer. On an occasion of this kind Peter stood up to address the meeting on the subject of appointing some one of their number to fill the place of Judas, the betrayer of our Lord, who had taken his own life, and died a horrible death. Peter proposes that he shall be chosen from among those who had attended upon the Saviour's teachings from the very beginning of his ministry, so that he might teach the truths taught him, and be with the rest a witness of the resurrection. Two are selected, and the matter is made a subject of prayer. To God, their great guide and counsellor, the choice is left, and when the lots are drawn, Matthias is the chosen one. There is no special power or authority granted to one more than the other, not even to Peter, as some have claimed ; for Paul, in Gal. ii. 11, withstood Peter because he was to be blamed ; he therefore was not in-

fallible, although he was honored by being the first to preach the gospel to Jew and Gentile. God's chosen ministers have a high commission, and should be selected for their holy office with prayer for guidance in the choice—we are taught this lesson by the prayer of the apostles; but the only apostolic mark God requires them to bear is that which is stamped by the Holy Spirit in their hearts; they should be men of prayer, men following closely the footsteps of the Saviour, and like Enoch of old, walking with God; such have a passport from on high to the baptismal font, the marriage altar, to the house of God, and the gate of heaven.

The Prayer as recorded.—Acts i.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry, and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

The Lord's Answer.—Acts i.

26 And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH.

This prayer is made by a company of the Saviour's followers, probably the hundred and twenty heretofore mentioned. They speak of a prophecy here which God had before spoken by his prophet David, concerning the Messiah. Before our Lord's crucifixion the apostles had overlooked every prediction of this kind, but now they are part of the knowledge of each heart. Scott says: "The language used in applying this prophecy to the 'child Jesus,' may refer to his immaculate conception by the Holy Spirit, this unction of the spirit preserved him holy through all the trials and temptations to which he was exposed; this aggravated the guilt of Pilate, the professed idolator, his attendants, Herod, the king, and the bulk of the Jewish nation, who treated him with cruelty and contempt." This is a united prayer, the whole company are influenced by the spirit of Jesus; it alludes to God's foreknowledge and determination of things future; they ask for boldness to proclaim the word of truth, for they had been injured, and threatened by those who had crucified the Saviour, and had need of the aid of the Holy Spirit to defend and help them, in spreading the knowledge of God in the world. Their prayer is answered, their hearts are filled with the Holy Spirit, they are now no more in bondage to sin, for grace hath set them free; all and everything they possess is given to

their Maker; one spirit of love and union pervades the whole company, and they speak with boldness the word of God.

The Prayer as recorded.—Acts iv.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is :

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

27 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

The Answer.—Acts iv.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

THE PRAYER OF STEPHEN.

Stephen is usually known as the first martyr, he was also one of the seven "men of honest report," who were elected to relieve the twelve apostles of a certain class of their labors. He was a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. In the chapter in which his prayer is recorded, we read of his defense against false and cruel charges, his powerful exhibition of the truth, and its effect on the people, among whom was Saul of Tarsus. The people were so maddened and excited by his words, that they drove him beyond the walls of the city, and there stoned him to death. In the petition of the expiring Stephen is the same gentle spirit of forgiveness shown by the Saviour toward his enemies; a spirit, which nothing but the grace of God in the heart can produce, and which none but the true Christian possesses.

The Prayer as recorded.—Acts vii.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

THE PRAYER OF SAUL OF TARSUS, AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

“Behold, he prayeth.” He who had breathed out threatenings and slaughter, had persecuted the church, despised and abused the followers of Christ, now breathes the vital breath of a Christian, and through all his subsequent life inculcates the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus, and enjoins, more than all the sacred writers, the duty of always “praying with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereto with all perseverance.” And what has caused this great change in Saul of Tarsus? The ardent, zealous persecutor is a child of God, the Holy Spirit, with his enlightening, purifying influence, has caused him to renounce all confidence in his own virtues; his strong will is now submissive to that of his Maker; he seeks to be justified not by his own merits, but by the Saviour; to use his own forcible words, it has been “given him to believe.” All this revolution in the mind and heart of Saul must be attributed, then, to the divine infusion of faith in his heart; it is not a mere conviction of his understanding, but a new life-giving principle, which fills his whole soul with new motives, new desires; its nature is spiritual, and the holy spark is only kept alive by spiritual communion with the great God who first

kindled it in the soul. "It gathers energy as it proceeds; the more advanced are its attainments, the more prospective are its views. The nearer it approaches to the invisible realities to which it is stretching forward, the more their dominion over it increases, till it almost makes the future present, and the unseen visible." Its light becomes brighter, its flame purer, its aspirations stronger, as life advances, and it approximates to its great object. This faith is an active principle, hence the prayer of Saul; the will of God was henceforward to guide him, not his own desires, or the sinful corruptions of his natural heart. God hath taken away that stony heart, and hath given a heart of flesh; he is born again; and now what is his work on earth, what will the Lord have him to do. Chosen as the apostle to the Gentiles, to tell of the riches and freeness of the grace of our God and Saviour, his soul was filled with incessant desires to advance the cause of the Redeemer. And is this he who so short time ago courted the favor of the intolerant Sanhedrim, who hailed men and women to prison, and who bitterly persecuted the followers of Christ? It is Saul of Tarsus, but over his heart has come that change, without which no child of Adam can be saved. This doctrine, so plainly exemplified in the case of Saul, is jeered at by the learned, the wise, the foolish, and the weak; but the Church of God, and the whole body of faithful followers of Christ, since Saul trembling and as-

tonished made this prayer, will bear testimony to its truth. In the language of another we would say, "Let not the timid Christian be discouraged, let not his faith in this doctrine be shaken, though he may find that the principle to which he trusts his eternal happiness is considered false by him who knows nothing of its truth, that the change, of which the sound believer exhibits so convincing an evidence, is derided as absurd by the philosophical skeptic, treated as chimerical by the superficial reasoner, or silently suspected as incredible by the decent moralist."

The Prayer as recorded.—Acts ix.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord?

The Lord's Answer.—Acts ix.

5 And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Continuation of the Prayer.—Acts ix.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

The Lord's Answer.—Acts ix.

6 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was there three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH FOR PETER.

Enter with us, reader, the same dark prison in which the apostles have been chained before. There, between two soldiers, oppressed in body by the heavy chains, lies Peter, watched by a vigilant sentinel. How is it possible an escape can be made? "God giveth his beloved sleep." Nothing disturbs the mind of Peter, although the next day he may lay down his life for the Lord. There is a feeling of firm trust in Peter's heart that all will be well, and perhaps a conviction drawn from the words of the Saviour to him, that his death would not occur till he was more aged.

"Sleep's calm wing is on his brow,
And thoughts of peace his spirit lull."

There is a united prayer from God's children ascending to heaven for Peter, that these bars and bolts which bind him may be broken, and that body and soul may be free: the Church prays, and God hears and answers. There is, too, in the house of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, a prayer-meeting that night, and Peter in bonds, Peter in prison, is not forgotten at the throne of grace. The effectual, fervent prayer availeth much: we must not only pray for ourselves, but for others. God's love enlarges man's heart, and fills it full of sympathy, it makes

the eye of the Christian watchful over the true interests of others ; are any in bonds, we are exhorted to pray for them ; are any sick, or in prison, we must still pray on ; we must pray as individuals, pray as a church. Prayer was made without ceasing for Peter. This is the strong language of scripture—the example is for us as Christians. Peter slept sweetly and well, for not even the strong light that filled that prison cell, nor the presence of the angel aroused him, till smitten and awakened by the words of the spirit, “ Rise up quickly ; ” his fetters are all unloosed, and Peter knows it is the work of the Lord. And was not his deliverance an answer to sincere, earnest prayer ?

The Prayers as recorded.—Acts xii.

5 Peter, therefore, was kept in prison : but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

The Answer.—Acts xii.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison ; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

THE PRAYERS AND PRAISES OF PAUL AND SILAS.

“There be three chief rivers of despondency, sin, sorrow, fear. Sin is the deepest, sorrow hath its shallows, and fear is a noisy rapid.”

In the hearts of Paul and Silas is joy that the world knows not of, “joy and peace in believing.” Sin is forgiven, sorrow hath flown away, and there fear has no resting place. Within the gloomy walls of that prison are heard “songs in the night,” prayer to the God of Israel: they are not captives; man cannot bind their spirits, it is only the poor clay⁷ tenement he has cruelly imprisoned, their souls are free. Chained in that low dungeon, suffering from the chastisement of the preceding day, instead of the groan of pain, the curse against the magistrates who had caused them to suffer for spreading and teaching the truth, the prisoners, who are confined with them, are awakened at the hour of midnight by the voice of prayer, and the hymn of praise. Paul and Silas are singing in that prison cell; it is music hallowed to God’s service, sweet breathings of the spirit, whose strains are caught by waiting angels, and carried to heaven, to swell the chorus which is sung

there to the praise of God and the Lamb for ever. And why are their fellow prisoners lost in wonder as their midnight praises reach their ears? Why does the world look on in astonishment, as it sees a smile lightening up the face of the suffering Christian, the child of God, calm in the midst of trial, rich in poverty, singing in prison, and filled with hope? Oh, they see, but they know not what is swelling the harmony in these calm hearts of Paul and Silas. It is a spirit born of heaven; its holy source, the great God himself; it is the moon that lights this little night of time, the night before a glorious morning. Paul and Silas realize what David, the sweet singer of Israel, expresses so beautifully: "The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his songs shall be with me." And, reader, the spirit of Paul and Silas may be yours. You, too, may through all your trials, and the clouds that gather so thickly over you, may look up and pray; instead of the tears that now bathe your sorrow-worn cheeks, the light of joy may be there; but before you can realize all this

"Your hearts must cast off their slough of darkness,
Their eclipse of hell and sin."

Your spirit, bound to earth, must be unloosened from its fetters here, would you breathe with Paul and Silas the pure air of heaven. God will take away all that is bearing your spirits downward, all

that is binding them to deceitful, unsatisfying earth. Ere you wait to see the idol mouldering to ashes, the phantom fading away, give your heart and its affections to God ; your spirit then will sing a purer, holier song than the world has ever charmed you with ; and in the prison house of earth your spirit may be free. Is your head bowed by the weight of sorrow in your heart, and the thousand strings of that " harp " shattered and broken, God's spirit can bring from them strains of heavenly music ; hymns at morning, hymns at midnight ; man cannot do this—earth, with all its wealth, cannot give your spirit rest—none but God, none but God, giveth songs in the night.

The Prayers and Praises as recorded.—Acts xvi.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

The Lord's Answer.—Acts xvi.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

THE PRAYER OF ST. PAUL IN THE TEMPLE.

The Lord had chosen Saul, the persecutor, as his apostle, to be a witness of the resurrection to men of all nations, and to teach the wonderful truths of God; to tell what he had himself seen and heard; to set forth to them the first elements of the gospel as a new development of the most ancient faith known to men; as a "chosen vessel" he was permitted visions of "that just one," who came to die and suffer for man. Some time after his conversion, while worshiping in the court of the temple, he is thrown into a trance, and in this state of ecstasy he is permitted to realize the immediate presence of the Lord

Jesus, and his prayer is there made to him. Paul seems to be fearful that the people will not receive his testimony, remembering, as they did, his former life, and his presence at the stoning of Stephen, as well as the part he had performed in his death; he reminds the Lord of all this, and would know his will concerning him. St. Paul seems to realize how difficult it will be for the worldling to comprehend the change in his heart, in his life, and doctrine, caused by his conversion, and his words are very suggestive, and full of deep meaning, "the putting off the old man with his deeds," the becoming a "new creature," were truths he could not proclaim in his own feeble strength. St. Paul prays like one that could feel for others, like one familiar with the weaknesses of our nature, who could allow for distrust, for misapprehension, who expected abuse and unbelief; he had not forgotten the deep pit out of which he had been taken, and he knew that the people still remembered him as Saul, the persecutor; how, then, would they receive him as the advocate of a cause on which he had once trampled?

The Prayer as recorded.—Acts xxii.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance.

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee :

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

The Lord's Answer.—Acts xxii.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

PRAYERS OF ST. PAUL FOR THE CHURCH AT ROME.

St. Paul, like all who feel an interest in the church of God, ever remembered her at the mercy-seat. The church at Rome was large, and among her numbers were persons of consideration, as well as young converts; he longs to commune with, and to encourage them, and in his earnest love for them exhibits a tenderness and watchful care that shows itself more particularly than in anything else, in his constant prayer for their spiritual welfare; "thus feeding the Church of God," in his absence, with food from heaven. He seems to feel in his inmost soul the great price that has been paid to purchase souls, and watches with a prayerful, intense interest, the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, calling often upon that God for her welfare, "who had brought him out of darkness into marvelous light." St. Paul's faith was constantly

kept bright by continuing in prayer. This is the reason he so constantly urges this duty upon the Church, assuring them that the spirit will help all infirmities, and teach each to pray aright. As a consequent upon these unceasing devotions, Paul tells us we shall grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the truth, and each heart shall be full of that love, which, in his own forcible language, is described as surpassing knowledge. Every Christian should pray often and much for the Church of God, not for this or that particular branch of it alone, but for the whole Church; Paul prayed for it, and condemns, through all his writings, a spirit of favoritism or partiality, and is ready to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all, and to pray for all. He says, "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit. But now are there many members, but one body."—1 Cor., xii. For each of these members or branches we are enjoined to pray, to cultivate for each that spirit of charity which thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked, to quell every feeling which should lead the eye to say to the hand, I have no need of thee, or the head to the feet, I have no need of you. If this member or that branch of the Church of God is suffering, let every other branch suffer with it, and pray for it. These are the lessons Paul would teach, viz., unity of spirit, and Christian charity.

The Prayer as recorded.—Rom. i.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Another Prayer.—Rom. x.

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Another Prayer.—Rom. xv.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Another Prayer.—Rom. xv.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF ST. PAUL FOR THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

There was no branch of the Church of God which had fallen into so many errors as that of Corinth, for there were contentions, divisions, and strifes among the people. St. Paul laments over these in prayer, while at the same time he thanks God for his gifts conferred on Christians in the church established there, and asks for an increase of this grace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. His affectionate and pathetic prayers for the Corinthians are intermingled with exhortations and directions to them. Prayer with St. Paul was not a solitary, independent exercise, but an exercise incorporated with many, and inseparably connected with that golden chain of Christian duties, of which, when so connected, it forms the most important link. St. Paul acted as well as prayed. This quickened his spiritual pulse, increased his ardor, made him watchful and anxious for the welfare of the Church.

Prayer was the great motive power which moved the machine ; prayer kept him supplied with work ; it made him “keen-sighted, clear-eyed ;” he was enabled to survey the whole Church, to see clearly the temptations with which she was surrounded in this licentious city of Corinth ; he saw the influence of false teachers on the minds of the people ; saw the effect of the “enticing words of man’s wisdom ;” hence he comes to them with prayer, and the simple story of the cross ; prays for them “with the spirit and the understanding ;” he would confirm them to the end of their course in the faith and hope of the gospel. St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, in which this prayer is recorded, is filled up with vindications of his own character against the calumnies which had been heaped upon it by his opposers, and contains, also, the most perfect and triumphant argument for the doctrine of the resurrection.

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Cor. i.

3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.

THE PRAYER OF ST. PAUL FOR THE CHURCH AT
EPHESUS.

This prayer is a part of St. Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus, written while he was a prisoner at Rome, and forwarded by Tychicus, who is called a beloved brother and faithful minister. Ephesus was at this time the metropolis of Asia; the worship of the goddess Diana was the prevailing religion; here was the temple reared for her followers; here, too, the Theatre, the largest structure of the kind ever erected by the Greeks—the ruins still remain, and are of interest as identifying the scene of one of Paul's most perilous conflicts. But the Church of God had been planted here through the instrumentality of Paul, and this prayer is made for its growth and welfare. Confined within the walls of a prison, his desire for their prosperity is unabated, and he seeks the throne of grace that they might be strengthened by God's spirit. The religion of Jesus Christ had many powerful opposers at Ephesus; the worship of the goddess Diana furnished employment to many in the manufacture of shrines and ornaments for the temple; it was also the seat of the black art, so that the public mind was familiarized with the pretension to supernatural gifts, "and Ephesian charms," and thus the people were hardened against the due effects of miracles. This art was not alone practiced by

the low and ignorant, but studied as a science by the learned philosophers of the age, as well as men of letters; these books sold for immense sums, and were a source of wealth to the people. These were a few of the many powers acting against the advancement of the simple religion of Jesus—that Jesus, whose name afterward turned the cheeks of the sorcerers to a pallid hue, and their books to ashes. St. Paul prays, he cannot now go to the Church, but he can, in his prison cell, bow low the knee in prayer, and lift up his voice to God for the prosperity of his children; they were dear to the heart of Paul, and he asks for them a heavenly father's care, a heavenly father's blessing.

The Prayer as recorded.—Eph. iii.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with the fullness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF ST. PAUL FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE.

The letter in which mention is made of Paul's earnest prayer for the Church at Colosse, is somewhat similar to that sent by him to the Ephesians, and exhibits his love and zeal for the success of God's cause. This branch of the Church is supposed to have been founded by Epaphras, who was sent there by Paul, and it is not recorded that the apostle had ever visited it. This church, at this time, seems to have been in a flourishing condition, for "his dear fellow servant," as Epaphras is called by St. Paul, had assured him of their love to Christ, and to him, for Christ's sake. Heretical sects had sprung up at this time, and philosophy, under different names, Aristotelian, or Platonic, prevailed to a great extent in that age; and mixed up, as it was, with Judaism, and Jewish tradition, it had assumed rather a religious form, and had crept into Colosse. St. Paul feared its effects on the Church; he warns Christians against its wily doctrines, a warning as necessary in every age of the Christian Church as then; a warning needed as long as men, in things of religion,

take philosophy rather than God's holy written word, as their guide.

The Prayer as recorded.—Col. i.

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ:

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA.

The good tidings of the love and devotedness of his brethren in the city of Thessalonica, filled the heart of Paul with thankfulness, and comforted him in his heavy trials, for he says: "Now we live if ye stand fast." Every message concerning the success of the gospel among the people of God, filled the soul of Paul with joy, and his lips with praise. In this petition there is expressed no desire for wealth, fame, or even an increase of converts, but that he may meet them again, and that not alone for the pleasure he would realize in beholding those for whom so often his prayers had risen to God, but that he might aid them spiritually, and perfect that which was lacking in their faith. It is the prayer of one risen with Christ, of "one whose spirit was so large in its affections, so high in its object, of a man who had so much of heaven in his friendships,

so much of soul in his attachments, that he thought time too brief, earth too scanty, worldly blessings too low, to enter deeply into his prayers for those for whom life itself would so soon be no more."

The Prayer as recorded.—1 Thess. iii.

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

"This truth in all your hearts receive:
That all the saints unite with care,
To prove the omnipotence of prayer;
Oh, then pray on, 'twill clear the way—
Chiefly for God's own Spirit pray:
There you shall find, if there you seek,
Wealth for the poor, strength for the weak;
Soundness for sickness, life for death,
Derived from this inspiring breath."

